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THE  
**BAMPTON LECTURER REPROVED;**

BEING

**A R E P L Y**

TO THE CALUMNIOUS CHARGES OF

THE REV. C. A. MOYSEY, D.D. ETC.

In his late Bampton Lectures against the Unitarians, and especially  
the Editors of the Improved Version ;

IN LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

**A L E T T E R,**

IN REPLY TO THE CHARGES OF THE VERY REVEREND

DEAN MAGEE,

In Volume II. Part II. of his Dissertations on  
Atonement and Sacrifice.

By **THOMAS BELSHAM,**  
MINISTER OF ESSEX STREET CHAPEL.

---

"The writers and wranglers in religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up  
with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it, as if there  
were no way into the church but through the Academy or Lyceum." LOCKE.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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As it has now become so much the fashion with a certain description of the Clergy, upon all public occasions, to make an attack upon the Unitarians on the one hand, and the Evangelical party on the other, I had long ceased to give myself any concern upon the subject, especially since the Letters which I had the honour to address to the Bishop of London; in which I have advanced what many have thought sufficient for the satisfaction of "men of sound understandings" and honest hearts," in defence of the Unitarians and their cause.

But my attention having been excited to Dr. Moysey's late Bampton Lectures, as concentrating in one focus all the abuse which has lately been, and indeed all that ever can be, vomited forth against the Unitarians, and particularly against the Editors of the Improved Version; and having been informed



by a learned friend and member of the University, that Bampton Lecturers are in high repute at Oxford, and likewise from other quarters that Dr. Moysey was a man of a correct and courteous character in private life, I was induced to comply with the recommendation of some valued friends to animadvert upon the extraordinary language which Dr. Moysey has held concerning the Unitarians, that it may not be supposed that we are silent because we have nothing to say. And I engaged in this undertaking the more willingly, as it afforded me an opportunity of defending the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament against the attacks which have been made upon their integrity and honour, which have all been collected and exaggerated in the most unqualified and aggravating language by Dr. Moysey. It is impossible that Dr. Moysey should ever have seen the volume itself, as in this case he could not have used language so unbecoming a gentleman and a scholar, and, I may add, a christian. Indeed it is very plain that he has raked all his information from the dunghill of Dean Magee; and how

far that very reverend dignitary is worthy of credit, will appear to those who take the trouble of reading the Appendix to this Work. It will be strange indeed if others do not take warning from the awkward predicaments into which Bishop. Burgess and Dr. Moysey have been betrayed by their too easy confidence in the *unguarded* assertions of the Dean of Cork.

Essex House,  
February 3, 1819.



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## THE BAMPTON LECTURER

REPROVED.

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### LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

OF the annual discharges which have lately issued from the Bampton battery with so much zeal and so little effect, to silence the voice and to impede the progress of truth and good sense in their accelerated and irresistible march, one of the least formidable is that of the year 1818, under the direction of the Rev. C. A. Moysey, D.D., rector of Walcot, Bath, chaplain to the Lord Rodney, and late student of Christ Church: and it is in submission to your judgment rather than my own, that I have consented to suspend for a short time my attention to subjects of much greater interest; in order to examine the charges which this learned and reverend writer has retailed against those unfortunate objects of his pious indignation, the Unitarians.

If indeed Unitarianism were to be crushed, and its professors were to be silenced, by vehement declamation, and by loud, repeated, and exaggerated charges of ignorance, of audacity, of pride, of infidelity, of blasphemy, of fraud, and falsehood; by false and calumnious allegations of rejecting the word of God, and of wilfully garbling or perverting, corrupting and mutilating the Scriptures of Truth, by gross misrepresentations of their principles and rules of judgment, and by miserable insinuations of disaffection and disloyalty to the government and constitution of their country,—the game is up—the contest is over—the Bampton squadron is victorious—Unitarianism lies dead in the field—and the banners of Orthodoxy wave in triumph over the ruins of the exploded sect. For in this mode of attack the learned Lecturer vies with the most virulent of his predecessors: and in such weapons the champions of Unitarianism possess but little skill. If truth and reason and revelation fail them, they surrender at discretion; their strong hold is lost.

Among other charges alleged against the Unitarians by this reverend Lecturer, they are accused of denying the popular doctrines in “no very decent terms.” What those terms are which have given offence, he has left his readers to guess; for it is not his custom to crowd his page with proofs.

And I believe he would find it difficult to produce examples, even from the most unguarded Unitarian writers, of charging their opponents as infidels, blasphemers, and wilful, fraudulent, and audacious perverters and corrupters of the Scriptures, and the like, with which his own pages abound. But perhaps that may be very *decent* in a Bampton Lecturer which would be very unbecoming in a Unitarian apologist; and I for one am content to allow that learned body and their allies a monopoly of this decorous language.

But the Unitarians may well cease to wonder at the treatment which they receive from the reverend Lecturer, when they see the manner in which he has conducted himself towards his venerable superior, the bishop of London. That accomplished Prelate, in the severe and unfounded animadversions which he has passed upon the Unitarians in his Primary Visitation Charge, has inadvertently represented "*prostration of the understanding* as indispensable to proficiency "in christian instruction." And though, in the Letters which I humbly addressed to his Lordship, in order to remove this unfortunate prepossession from his mind, I endeavoured to clear christianity and its doctrines from the stigma which appeared to be cast upon them by this unlucky expression, it never entered into my imagination that the words

“prostration of the understanding” were any thing more than an unguarded phrase which his Lordship would be happy to avail himself of the first opportunity of retracting. The bishop of London is too well acquainted with the state of public opinion in the nineteenth century, to imagine that any religion will pass among men of sense which requires as its basis *prostration of the understanding*. And for that reason I have thought, that the learned and acute Jeremy Bentham has borne rather hard upon his Lordship in his late very extraordinary publication, entitled “Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism Examined\*.” But the reverend Bamptonian has seized upon this unfortunate expression as though it were inspired by Heaven: and with all imaginable gravity he brings it over and over, and lays it down with all the authority of an axiom, that “prostration of the understanding” is an essential preliminary to a sound belief in the doctrines of the Established Church. How this doctrine might be relished by the learned au-

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\* Mr. Bentham argues as though his Lordship had intentionally represented *prostration of the understanding* and *humble docility*, as essential to the character of a true church-of-England man, and a *sine qua non* in all who desire to partake of the benefit of the national schools.—Bentham’s Church-of-Englandism, Appendix, No. 1.

ditory to which it was addressed, or how the bishop may approve of the use which the learned Lecturer has made of his Lordship's inadvertent language, it is not for me to say : but truth constrains me to acknowledge, in justice to the reverend Lecturer, that, for the reception of his own exposition of the doctrine of the Church, and for the admission of his own arguments in favour of its public symbols, no " prostration of the understanding" can be too mean, no " docility" of spirit can be too " humble."

The learned Lecturer appears to be rather out of humour with the Legislature, for the humanity and justice which it lately exemplified in rescuing the Unitarians from the fangs of the persecuting laws by the Trinity Doctrine Bill, which will immortalize the name of Mr. William Smith, by whom it was introduced, and endear his memory to every lover of truth, justice, and liberty. This reverend gentleman, however, seems to think that it is a great hardship upon the clergy, that they are now compelled to refute the Unitarian doctrine by the circuitous route of learning and argument, instead of silencing them by the old short and direct course of pains and penalties\*.

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\* The ill-humour which some of the clergy, so little to their credit, manifest against the relief granted to the Unitarians, reminds me of honest John Bunyan's account of the two giants



“That IMPUNITY,” says this pious protestant advocate, “that IMPUNITY which the Legislature “has formally granted to them (the Unitarians) “of late, appears to have awakened their hopes “and aroused their activity; and it is *therefore*,”—*i. e.* since pains and penalties have been abolished which would otherwise have saved them the trouble—“it is *therefore* the duty of the appointed “ministers of God’s word to meet their efforts by “corresponding exertions, to detect the fallacy of “their assertions, and to prevent, so far as we can, “the mischief of their opinions from gaining “farther ground.” (p. 2.)

What a pity it is that the Legislature did not foresee the difficult task which they were imposing upon the clergy, by granting IMPUNITY to these obstinate heretics, and thereby compelling the “appointed ministers” to study the scriptures, instead of fulminating anathemas, and delivering the adversary over to the secular arm! It

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Pope and Pagan, who took their station near the Valley of the Shadow of Death, to the great annoyance of pilgrims who formerly travelled that way, many of whom they seized and devoured, whose bones were scattered at the mouth of their dens. But as to giant Pagan, he was dead long ago; and though old Pope was still living, he was become feeble and paralytic, and sat at a distance biting his nails and grinning, and cursing the pilgrims because he could not get at them.

might possibly have induced our good-natured governors to have listened to the advice of those consistent protestant prelates, who maintain that the terrors of the law are the best safeguards of religion.

The reverend Lecturer (p. 224) appears to believe that the Unitarians, encouraged by the *impunity* which has been granted them, have been roused to greater activity than before. And if it were so, where would have been the harm of setting so many pious and learned clergymen to work to refute their errors?—But the fact is otherwise. The Unitarians rejoiced in the success of Mr. Smith's Bill, because it placed them upon a level with their fellow subjects. They now enjoy their religious liberty upon the ground of legal right, not as a matter of courtesy and forbearance. But in point of *security*, they feel no difference between the protection of the spirit of the times and that of the laws. In this enlightened and tolerant age, what miserable narrow-minded bigot would have dared to rouse the spirit of the persecuting laws against the Unitarians? or who can believe, if such a savage were to be found, that the mild spirit of the House of Brunswick would not immediately have issued a *noli prosequi*, as upon all former occasions, to have stopped such infamous proceedings? The Unitarians felt

no fears. And the learned Lecturer knows but little of mankind, or of the history of religion, if he is not aware that persecution has never damped the zeal or stopped the progress of a rising and ardent sect. The truth is, that Unitarianism has preserved its steady march : it has neither been accelerated or retarded by the repeal of the penal laws. All its engines were at work before. Plain speaking, sound argument, sober criticism, Scripture proofs, theological learning, ecclesiastical history, public preaching, fair and learned controversy, Unitarian societies for the distribution of books, Unitarian funds, Unitarian missionaries, Unitarian academies, and the Improved Version,—all these machines were in motion long before the Trinity Doctrine Bill was thought of, and their success would have been the same if that bill had never existed. And if the success has been great,—and it has indeed exceeded all expectation,—it has been owing to no other advantage than that which truth, familiarly explained, and calmly, fearlessly, and judiciously defended, must always possess over error rashly persisted in and intemperately maintained, even though power and interest, and fashion and popularity, are ranged under its banners. The repeal of the last odious relics of the persecuting code is an honour to the age in which it was ac-

complished, to the Government by which it was countenanced, to the patriot by whom it was introduced, and to the Parliament by which it was enacted ; it restores to the Unitarians their natural rights as freeborn subjects of the United Empire, who have done nothing to forfeit their birth-right ; and it is hailed by them with joy and gratitude to the Government by which these rights have been acknowledged and restored, and with thankfulness to Divine Providence for having cast their lot in an æra so auspicious : but it has not, to my knowledge at least, been the means of inducing a single effort for the promotion and vindication of Evangelical truth, which the Unitarians would not have thought it their duty to have exerted, had the persecuting code still continued to disgrace the Statute Book.

I am, &c.

## LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

**T**HERE are three arts which are of singular use in controversy when victory, and not truth, is the prize in view: first, to misrepresent your adversary's principles: secondly, to give him a bad name: and thirdly, to take for granted the proposition to be proved. In each of these arts the learned Lecturer has shown himself no mean proficient.

In the first place, it is the basis of his attack upon the Unitarians, that they *reject a doctrine*, however clearly revealed, merely *because it is incomprehensible*.—To allege all the passages in which this charge is either asserted or insinuated, would be to transcribe half the volume. The following are a fair specimen.

Page 13. "The Unitarians hold the supremacy of human reason, and its competency to accept or reject even the dictates of Omnipotence."

Page 14. "They who will not abide by any thing which they do not comprehend, must assert that all which is above our comprehension is untrue; or at least that we are justified in treat-

“ing it as untrue. And what is this, but to make  
 “mortal intellect the measure of divine truth?”

Page 16. “If religion be now rendered in all  
 “respects so very simple a matter, and so much  
 “within the compass of every man’s intellect, that  
 “we may reject any duty, or any point of belief,  
 “however positively enforced, provided that we  
 “disapprove it, then are we all now far wiser than  
 “the wisest of antiquity, &c.”

Page 18. “So long as these adversaries of the  
 “received faith (*i. e.* the Unitarians) reject with  
 “scorn all prostration of the understanding even  
 “before the throne of God, there is little or no  
 “hope of reclaiming them from their errors. The  
 “right of human judgment in opposition to di-  
 “vine revelation was the temptation held out to  
 “Eve.”

A charge so unjust and illiberal as this is only  
 to be met by a direct negative. And I do aver in  
 my own name and in that of my Unitarian bre-  
 thren, that no one individual among us rejects  
 the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrine,  
 solely because it is incomprehensible: but we re-  
 fuse our assent to the doctrine of the Trinity be-  
 cause, according to some expositions of it, it is a  
 gross and palpable contradiction; and because in  
 every form it is unfounded in reason and unsup-

ported by the Scriptures. So that all the learned Lecturer's pious declamation against the Unitarians for "rejecting the dictates of Omnipotence" because they are incomprehensible, and for establishing the right of human judgment in opposition to divine revelation, is quite superfluous and useless.

The second art of controversy is that of *giving the adversary a bad name*: and in this art the learned Lecturer is not at all deficient. Of calumnious and opprobrious epithets he is by no means sparing: he hesitates not to impute evil motives; and where a direct attack is thought inexpedient, very intelligible innuendoes are always at hand: viz.

Page 2. "I propose to bring under examination the principles of a sect which is daily striving to advance itself and to introduce disorder by overthrowing the very foundations of the Christian faith; I mean the sect of Socinians, or, as they style themselves in these days, Unitarians."

Page 9. "The name of Unitarian Christians, if to the term Unitarian that sense be attached which they affix to it, is a contradiction in terms."

Page 10. "Such pretences are mere deceptions: and the addition of a highly respected

“ name is but too much like a shield to cover their  
 “ real tenets and as a snare to draw in the unguarded.”

Page 12. “ That the audacity of man should  
 “ broach such opinions is unhappily no matter of  
 “ wonder. But that they who do thus should as-  
 “ sume the very name which they labour to bring  
 “ to nothing, is a proof of something very differ-  
 “ ent from zeal for truth. All who have well exa-  
 “ mined their tenets can judge of their names and  
 “ professions: but in regard to others, it may  
 “ well be feared, lest the name should sometimes  
 “ answer the purpose for which it is assumed, by  
 “ putting them off their guard against the insidi-  
 “ ous practices of the Unitarians.”

The learned Lecturer grows warmer as he ad-  
 vances: I shall only add one more passage from  
 page 25.

“ The testimony to this doctrine (*i. e.* the Tri-  
 “ nity in Unity) is so direct and convincing, that  
 “ Unitarians, in the pride of their heart, have set  
 “ their own fancies above God's word: and in  
 “ order to get rid of its evidence, have expunged  
 “ and altered many passages which bore witness  
 “ to it most copiously. Foul methods, indeed, by  
 “ which to hide an error, whether they were  
 “ thrust upon the adoption of them by vanity or  
 “ by obstinacy.”



Such is the language and the spirit with which this pious polemic enters upon the controversy ; and in this way does he endeavour to prejudice the feelings of his readers against the objects of his animadversion. The charges alleged or insinuated are indeed very grave. But to the whole and every part of the indictment the Unitarians plead Not guilty ; and they defy their reverend accuser to prove one tittle of his accusation. But what must we think of a person who can, without a blush, bring forward such allegations without even the shadow of a proof !

How easy would it be for the Unitarians to retaliate upon their opponents if they were so inclined ! But what would the learned Lecturer say, if an advocate for the Unitarian doctrine were to introduce his argument with some such preface as this ?

‘ These Bampton Lecturers profess to be great sticklers for modern orthodoxy, and zealous advocates for certain creeds and symbols and formularies, which are now pretty much out of date with men of learning and reflection. But let it not be imagined that men of their talents and learning are really the dupes of popular superstition. No such thing. *All who have well examined can form a pretty correct judgment of their names and professions ; while they assume*

*the name of orthodoxy, their motive is something very different from zeal for truth. All things considered, therefore, the audacity with which they brach such opinions is unhappily no matter of wonder. And though these mysterious and absurd systems are contradicted in almost every page of the New Testament, they regard it not; but to get rid of its evidence, and to make the Scriptures appear to countenance their impious absurdities, they collect a few texts, the words of which, separate from their connexion, appear to favour their extravagant opinions; and these they repeat over and over, so as to make common people believe that the Scripture is full of them. But this is not enough. To promote their design, they retain in the text, and cite as indisputable authorities, passages which they know to be interpolated, which have long ago been rejected by the most respectable clergymen of their own church, and are now given up as spurious by all the learned in Europe of every persuasion. Foul methods, indeed, by which to hide error and to propagate the doctrines they espouse, whether they were thrust upon the adoption of them by their own folly, or by the hope of better preferment.'*

Would any one say that this is a fair and justifiable mode of attack? or that it would have any tendency to bring the controversy to a conclu-

sion? Let it then be remembered, that if such weapons are not justifiable on the one side, they are equally unjustifiable on the other. Let them therefore be cast away by both parties, and let the question be settled by fair discussion. If truth be the object, wherever it is found, both parties will gain by the discovery.

There is a third art of controversy in which the learned Lecturer likewise manifests his polemical prowess; and that is, in *assuming as fact the very point in discussion*. The Unitarians, equally with the Bampton Lecturer and his allies, receive Jesus as a teacher sent from God, and they believe all which Jesus taught. The question between them and their opponents is, whether our Lord or his apostles really did teach the doctrines which now pass for orthodox. Hear how the learned Lecturer decides the case; and with what authority, I do not say *audacity*, he delivers his dictum. (P. 7.)

“What the faith of christians is, has long since  
 “been known and established. It acknowledges  
 “that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is  
 “God and man. God in identity with the God-  
 “head of the Father, united with the manhood  
 “inherited from his mother. The christian faith  
 “does not barely admit, that there was once a

" person called Jesus Christ upon earth, a teacher  
 " of righteousness, sent from God, and now re-  
 " warded with a high degree of exaltation in  
 " heaven, but still, with all this, no more than a  
 " creature. A christian is not at liberty to take  
 " so much of the faith as he may think proper,  
 " and to reject the rest. No man *can be called a*  
 " *christian*, even in profession, unless he hold not  
 " only that Christ existed as the man Jesus here  
 " on earth, but that he was very God at that very  
 " time; that his Godhead had existed in identity  
 " with the Father as to being and power, from all  
 " eternity, though with distinction as to person,  
 " and that he shall so exist till time shall be no  
 " more. This WE HOLD to have been the faith of  
 " christians as to the person of our blessed Sa-  
 " viour from the beginning—and this the Unit-  
 " rians deny. Whether the truth rest with them,  
 " or with us, will be matter for future discussion."  
 He adds however, not indeed very consistently,  
 " but that such a faith is *of necessity* attached  
 " to the name of christian can hardly be dis-  
 " puted."

So then all that is left for discussion with the  
 Unitarians is a fact which can hardly be dis-  
 puted. But the truth is, that the Unitarians, not-  
 withstanding the learned Lecturer's dictatorial  
 assertions, do both dispute it and disprove it, and

that with the utmost facility. Indeed it is surprising that the reverend Lecturer with the New Testament in his hands, and knowing that other people have the same New Testament in their hands likewise, can summon up courage to hazard such unqualified assertions. For where will he find, from the beginning to the end of the scriptures, any thing like his mysterious doctrine, that while Christ *existed as a man upon earth, he was at that very time very God?* or that his *God-head had existed in identity with the Father as to being and power from all eternity, though with distinction as to person?* And where will he find that the profession of this strange unintelligible notion is of necessity attached to the name of *christian?* How widely different is this wretched jargon from the sublime simplicity of the gospel creed! For what purpose did the evangelist John write his gospel? Was it to teach simple unlearned christians the inexplicable mystery of *identity of being with distinction of person?* Far from it. He expressly tells us (John xx. 31.) that "these are written that ye might believe "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This doctrine was in opposition to the heresy of the Gnostics, who taught that Jesus was one being and Christ another, a celestial spirit, who being joined to Jesus at his baptism deserted him on the

cross: but the apostle wrote his gospel to prove that Jesus and Christ were the same person.

Again: What was the faith, upon the profession of which the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized? In the very words of the apostle John he declares, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts viii. 37. No addition had then been made to the Apostles' Creed.—Exactly parallel to this is the apostle Paul's description of saving faith: Rom. x. 9. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And yet in the very teeth of the apostle's plain and explicit declaration, the learned Lecturer gives us a long bead-roll of mysteries about Jesus Christ being God and man—God in identity with the Father, and manhood inherited from the mother, of which neither John, nor Philip, nor Paul, mention one word, but the profession of which the reverend Lecturer tells us is necessary to entitle a man to the name of Christian. He must, however, excuse the Unitarians, if, with all due deference to the ability and learning of a Bampton Lecturer, they presume to prefer the authority of the apostles and evangelists to his; and are quite satisfied with the declaration of Paul, that "if they confess with their mouth that Jesus is their Master, and be-

“ lieve with their heart that God has raised him “ from the dead, they shall be saved ;” even though, in direct defiance of this high authority, the learned Lecturer and his venerable colleagues should exclude them from the christian community, deny them the christian name, and denounce them as infidels and blasphemers, because they refuse their assent to certain metaphysical subtleties which are beyond any one’s comprehension, and not one word of which is contained in the New Testament\*.

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\* The opinion of Mr. Locke, and Mr. Locke’s authority was once of considerable weight in the University of Oxford, which has the honour of reckoning his name amongst the most illustrious of her sons, is decidedly in opposition to that of the Bampton Lecturer. Few studied the scriptures with greater attention and success than Mr. Locke ; yet he was far from being able to discover all those profound mysteries in them which are so evident to Dr. Moysey. The great design of his admirable treatise upon the Reasonableness of Christianity is to show, which he has done in the clearest light, that the only faith which christianity requires as essential to the name and character of a christian, is a belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and that he was raised from the dead.

“ These two,” says this eminent writer, (p. 152, edit. Lond. 1810. Johnson.) “ faith and repentance, *i. e.* believing “ Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the new covenant to be performed by all “ those who would obtain eternal life.”

He remarks (p. 140) that “ it will be objected by some,

The reverend Lecturer very kindly warns his readers, that "a christian is not at liberty to take "so much of the faith as he may think proper, and "to reject the rest." In return for which seasonable admonition, I would beg leave to remind him and his friends, that a christian is not at liberty to add to the doctrine which Christ and his apostles taught, and much less to narrow the terms of salvation which they have laid down, and to ex-

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"that to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, "is but a *historical*, and not a justifying or a saving faith."

"To which," says he, "I answer, that I allow to the "makers of systems and their followers, to invent and use what "distinctions they please, and to call things by what names "they think fit; but I cannot allow to them, or to any man, "an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that "which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the "believing that which our Saviour and his apostles preached, "and proposed *alone* to be believed, a *historical faith*, they "have their liberty: but they must have a care how they deny "it to be a *justifying* or *saving* faith, when our Saviour and his "apostles have declared it so to be, and taught no other which "men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life; unless they can so far make bold "with our Saviour, for the sake of their beloved systems, as "to say that he forgot what he came into the world for; and "that he and his apostles did not instruct people right in the "way and mysteries of salvation. I challenge them to show "that there was any other doctrine, upon their assent to "which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers or



clude those whom Christ has received. If they who "take away from the word of prophecy shall have their part taken away out of the book of life," let it also be remembered, "that if any man

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"unbelievers, and accordingly received into the church of Christ as members of his body, as far as mere believing could make them so, or else kept out of it. This was the only gospel article of faith which was preached to them."

Poor Mr. Locke! How little he knew of the gospel; of saving faith; or even of what is necessary to entitle a man to the name of christian! Unfortunately for him, he lived before the Bampton Lecture was instituted, and was a stranger to the notable discoveries of modern divines.

The learned Jortin does not appear to have been much more enlightened upon the subject of saving faith, than his great predecessor Locke. "If," says he, "Taylor, and Tillotson, and Erasmus, and Chillingworth, and John Hales, and Locke, and Episcopius, and Grotius, and many who shall not be named, had been contemporaries, and had met together freely to determine the important question, what makes a man a christian? and what profession of faith should be deemed sufficient? they would probably have agreed, notwithstanding the diversity of opinion which they might all have had upon some theological points. There have been others indeed, who on such an occasion would have given us an ample catalogue of necessities, the inference from which would have been, that it must needs be a very learned, and a very subtle, and a very ingenious thing to be a good christian. For some of these necessities are of so refined a nature that the understanding can hardly lay hold of them, or the memory retain them."—Jortin's Preface to his *Notes on Eccl. Hist.* p. 23.

“ add to these things, God shall add to him the  
 “ plagues that are written in this book.”

After all, how absurd is it at this time of day,  
 for any persons who possess the slightest preten-

“ There are religious opinions,” says the late celebrated bishop of Landaff, “ which do not require the exertion of the  
 “ magistrate’s Veto to repress their promulgation. Such are  
 “ the speculative doctrines of christianity concerning the antecedent state of Jesus Christ, the nature and end of vicarious sacrifice, the intermediate state of the soul, the mode  
 “ of our resurrection, and a thousand others: I call these  
 “ speculative opinions; because the two great foundations of  
 “ christianity, that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, and that he  
 “ rose from the dead, (upon which all our hopes as christians  
 “ are founded, by which hopes all our actions as men are determined,) stand firmly established, in whatever manner  
 “ these, and questions such as these, are decided, or whether  
 “ they can be decided or not.”—Watson’s Misc. Tracts, p. 10. ed. 1815.

Perhaps the authority of Locke, Jortin, and Watson, may be deemed of some weight in the scale, in opposition to that of the Rev. Dr. Moysey, rector of Walcot, who solemnly assures us, upon the faith of a Bampton Lecturer, that “ no  
 “ man can be called a christian, even in profession, unless he  
 “ holds, not only that Christ existed as the man Jesus here  
 “ on earth, but that he was very God at that very time, and  
 “ that his Godhead had existed in identity with the Father, as  
 “ to being and power, from all eternity, though with distinction as to person.”

What a “ very learned, a very subtle, and a very ingenious man” one of Dr. Moysey’s christians must be!

sions to a sound understanding and liberality of mind, to affect to exclude their christian brethren from their rights and privileges as members of the church of Christ, merely because they differ from them in certain mysterious questions, though they are equally honest in their inquiries after truth ! Surely none but the lowest, the most ignorant and despicable of mankind, none whose understandings are not prostrate to the most contemptible extreme, can now seriously believe that any truly virtuous and upright man, such for example as Newton or Clarke or Locke, can without doubt perish everlastingly, only because he withholds his assent from the palpable contradictions of the Athanasian Creed ! It is, indeed, high time for learned and liberal men to drop these foolish anathemas in theological controversy. Let them be zealous in their inquiries after truth : it deserves their most laborious and indefatigable research. Moral and religious truth is a pearl of inestimable value. Let them, if they please, contend earnestly for the faith : and if they have discovered truth, let them in the spirit of benevolence and kindness communicate the blessing to others. But let them not fondly flatter themselves that they are the only favourites of heaven, and take upon themselves to sit in judgment upon and to condemn their fellow servants. Another, who has

not been equally successful in his inquiries, may have been equally humble, honest, and diligent with themselves, and therefore may be equally acceptable with themselves to that God who is indulgent to the frailty of human nature, and who is ready to make gracious allowance for unavoidable ignorance and invincible prejudice. And what are we, that we should reject those whom God has received?

And to speak plainly, In what a ridiculous and degrading light does a man of learning and character, who makes no pretensions to supernatural illumination, place himself when he lends his name to such illiberal censures! Who, it may be said, is this Dr. Moysey, who takes upon himself to sit in judgment upon the character and claims of hundreds and thousands of his fellow christians in different regions of the world! who like another antichrist takes his seat in the temple of God, usurps the prerogative of the Great Supreme, and opens and shuts the gates of Heaven! What is his authority, and what are his qualifications, that he should presume to exclude from the christian community, multitudes of whose real character it is impossible for him to judge, who equally with himself acknowledge Jesus as their Master, who yield an unfeigned assent to his doctrine, and submission to his authority, and many of whom

are no way inferior in any valuable intellectual or moral attainment to their self-constituted censor and judge? At any rate, if he expects that they should bow to his authority, let him at least produce his credentials. Till then, they must beg leave to regard all his solemn and pompous anathemas as a mere *brutum fulmen*, the private opinions of one Dr. Moysey, rector of a village in Somersetshire, who appears to have meddled with things which he does not very well understand, and to have intruded himself into an office to which he was not called, and for which he is but indifferently qualified; whose censures therefore will be duly appreciated by a discerning public.

I am, &c.

## LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

**M**y design in writing these Letters is not to discuss the threadbare arguments concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, which have been stated and urged by much abler advocates than the learned Lecturer, but to rebut the charges and repel the abuse which this pious ecclesiastic has poured forth, after the fashion of the day, against that body of christians to which I shall ever esteem it my highest honour to belong, the Unitarians. I shall therefore be very brief in my observations upon the arguments alleged in favour of what this writer calls the *doctrines*, and the Unitarians the *corruptions*, of Christianity; though some of the learned Lecturer's observations are too novel and too curious to be suffered to pass without due notice.

The second Sermon treats concerning "the doctrine of the Holy Trinity," that grand and fundamental corruption of the christian religion which has paved the way for almost all the rest, and which is defended by the learned Lecturer pretty much in the usual way.

He is offended with the Unitarians for objecting to this doctrine as "inconsistent with reason," which, he tells us, "is the old plea of Deists and "Infidels," and which, to say the truth, is not at all the worse for wear. But instead of proving that the doctrine of the Trinity is not inconsistent with reason, he very judiciously blinks this question, and spends page after page in proving that a doctrine may be true which reason cannot fully comprehend; which is a truism that nobody denies, and which is nothing to the purpose.

The fact is, that though all Trinitarians agree in repeating the same form of words, their ideas are as opposite as light and darkness. Some of the explanations of the doctrine are not at all contradictory to reason, and can only be opposed as unsupported by argument and as contrary to Scripture.—When Dr. Sherlock maintains that the three persons of the Trinity are as distinct from each other as three men, Peter, James, and John, agreeing only like three men in one common nature, the proposition is perfectly intelligible, and involves no metaphysical contradiction. It can only be objected, that in this case there would be three Gods: a fact which is unsupported by the phenomena of nature, and is contrary to the Scriptures.—When Dr. Wallis, in express contradiction to Dr. Sherlock, advances an hypothesis

strictly Unitarian, which in its day met with the decided approbation of the University of Oxford, namely, that it is "a *silly* mistake that a divine person is as much as to say a divinity or God, "when indeed it is only a mode or relation of "God to his creatures;" when he states that "the "Divine Being bears to his creatures these three "relations, modes, or respects, that he is their Creator, their Redeemer, their Sanctifier;" and adds, "This is what we mean, and ALL THAT WE MEAN, "when we say God is three persons; he hath those "three relations to his creatures, and is thereby "no more three Gods than he was three Gods to "the Jews, because he calleth himself the God "of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God "of Jacob\*;" of this doctrine, so warmly ap-

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\* See Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity, 1693. This zealous champion of what was then regarded at Oxford as the orthodox faith, in his spirited reply to Dr. Sherlock, who it must be owned had treated the Oxford decree with very little ceremony, thus further illustrates what was at that time received as the true doctrine concerning the three persons in the Godhead:

"If Dr. Sherlock," says he, "were dean of St. Paul's, dean of Windsor, and dean of Westminster, should we thence argue that, since the Dean is a man, an animal, and a substance, therefore, because of three distinct substantial deaneries, he is three distinct men, three distinct animals, and three distinct substances? I should rather say, that



plauded by that learned body of which the author was a member, no one can say that it is inconsistent with reason ; though it may be justly objected to as verbally incorrect. The persons of the Father and the Son are never confounded in the New Testament. The Father never sustains the character of the Messiah, and the Son is never represented as the Maker of heaven and earth.—On the other hand, the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity is full of contradiction from

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“ Dr. Sherlock would in such case sustain three persons without being three men, three animals, or three substances.”  
Wallis’s Answer to Sherlock, p. 13, 14, second edit.

The learned polemic charges Dr. Sherlock’s hypothesis of three distinct infinite eternal minds, not only as “ heresy,” but as “ a new trick to play the game into the Socinians’ hands:” but it may perhaps be thought that Dr. Wallis’s own hypothesis is quite as favourable to the Unitarian doctrine. So true is it, that in the heat of controversy men do not always see the tendency of their own positions. Dr. Wallis, indeed, guards his doctrine from the charge of Sabellianism, by alleging that a good deity “ is not merely an empty name, but does import a substantial dignity as the *ground* of that relation, and “ a substantial man as the subject of it.” But it may reasonably be doubted, whether his Realist brethren would be satisfied with this explanation. At any rate, it is evident that Lord Peter and brother Jack are not the only people who sometimes run foul of one another when they fancy themselves at the greatest distance. Brother Martin himself is apt now and then to run his head against a post.

the beginning to the end: and no one can profess to believe it till his understanding is laid prostrate in the very dust.—The same prostration appears to me to be necessary for the adoption of bishop Burgess's hypothesis, namely, That three persons, neither of which is a being, that is, three non-entities, constitute one God, the most perfect of all beings.—But paramount in absurdity to either of these, if such pre-eminence is possible, is that which is brought forward by our learned Lecturer with approbation from bishop Gastrell, and which is best expressed in his own words as they stand in the note at the foot of p. 58 of the Bampton Lectures for 1818, by the Rev. C. A. Moysey, D.D. &c.\*

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\* In exploring the dark wilderness of mystery, the Bampton Lecturers are determined not to be behind hand with any of their learned predecessors. And, among other grand discoveries for which believers in the present age are indebted to these profound Theologians, one of the most original and most prominent is that of the reverend and eminently learned Reginald Heber, rector of Hodnet, who in his fourth Bampton Lecture, published in the year 1816, has with great gravity and an immense profusion of learning attempted to prove—what does the reader think?—Let him not smile, for the learned Lecturer is perfectly serious—Why, that the archangels Michael and Gabriel are neither more nor less than the Son and the Holy Ghost. What does not the christian world owe to the memory of the Rev. John Bampton, M.A., canon of Salisbury, without the aid of whose seasonable bequest the christian

“ These three names, of God the Father, Son,  
 “ and Holy Ghost, must denote a threefold dif-  
 “ ference or distinction belonging to God, but  
 “ such as is consistent with the unity and simpli-  
 “ city of the divine nature; for each of these in-  
 “ cludes the *whole* idea of God and *something*  
 “ *more*. So far as they express the nature of God,  
 “ they all adequately and exactly signify the same.  
 “ It is the additional signification which makes  
 “ all the distinction between them.”

So, then, according to this newly discovered or more properly revived hypothesis of the Trinity, the Father includes the whole idea of God and something more: the Son includes the whole idea of God and something more: and the Holy Ghost includes the whole idea of God and something more: while altogether, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost make but one entire God and no more.

This is indeed the mystery of mysteries: *Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii*. It transcends transubstantiation itself. It is a mystery at which *reason stands aghast*; and *faith herself* must be

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church would have been kept in ignorance of these splendid discoveries, and would have known nothing more than they could have learned from the writings of the apostles and evangelists! How blessed are our eyes and ears, which see and hear things of which they never dreamed!

more than "*half confounded*." Well might the learned Lecturer so earnestly and repeatedly call for and enjoin the lowest prostration of the understanding before he divulged so awful a secret. Well might he cry Avaunt! to the busy and meddlesome Unitarians, who are so notorious for their profane habit of prying into holy mysteries, and their troublesome opposition to implicit faith.

But for my own part, I must profess, that however I may be branded by the learned Lecturer as a Deist, an infidel, a heretic, a blasphemer, or with any other term of reproach which may be drawn from his copious vocabulary; if the penal code itself were to be restored, so that I might no longer speak truth with *impunity*; nay, even if the wholesome statute *de hæretico comburendo* were again to be called into action, and I were absolutely bound to the stake; yet with all these powerful aids to unlock the understanding and to support the faith, I could never be brought to believe the doctrine of the learned Bamptonian Lecturer to be true, viz. that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each of them include the "whole idea of God and something more," and yet when taken together that they make up one entire God and nothing more.

The learned Lecturer, however, ventures to assert (p. 59.), "that his doctrine of the Trinity "is proved by the very words of the New Testa-

“ment, which explicitly teach it.” But if they do teach any such doctrine as he contends for, it must be in the way that Lord Peter proved that his father’s Will required his sons to wear shoulder-knots; that is, by picking out the words and syllables separate from the connexion in which they stand; for that no such doctrine is plainly revealed in the New Testament, is obvious to every one who is able to read.

The learned writer has taken some pains to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity was a heathen doctrine\*—which I believe; and also that it is a doctrine of the Old Testament†, and that the Jews were Trinitarians without knowing it--which I do not believe; even though the word *Elohim* is in the plural number‡; though there is a three-

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\* “It exists in the wild mythology of the nations of Hindostan.” p. 39;—and this I suspect was its true origin.

† “A Trinity of persons in the Godhead is a doctrine which may be traced throughout the books of the Old Testament.” p. 40.

‡ “That a plural name was commonly employed is manifest in the original language of the scriptures, though one particular word *Elohim*, which ought to have been rendered Gods, is commonly translated God. In the beginning Gods created, &c.” See Gen. i. 1. p. 43. According to this mode of reasoning Moses was a Trinity in Unity, for it is said, Exod. vii. 1. “See I have made thee *Elohim* (Gods) to Pharaoh.”

fold benediction in the book of Numbers (vi. 24)\*; though the word holy is repeated three times in Isaiah vi.\*; and though angels appeared in parties of three to Abraham and to Lot†. To which might be added with equal propriety, that Noah had three sons, that Job had three friends, and that David had three worthies. To affect to argue the doctrine of the Trinity from the scriptures of the Old Testament, and in flat contradiction to the uniform, universal, invariable testimony of the Jews in all ages, who must best understand their own language, and their own scriptures, is an insult upon common sense; while the doctrine itself is in direct opposition to the main object and design of the Jewish dispensation, which was to teach and to inculcate what our Lord justly lays down as the first and greatest of all truths, the simple Unity of God—"The Lord is our God, the Lord is one." Mark xii. 29.

The learned Lecturer only produces two texts out of the New Testament to prove his doctrine of the Trinity. The first is the form of baptism Matt. xxviii. 19.; "Go and teach all nations,

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\* See p. 41. Note.

† "We might be allowed to account the appearances of angels to Abraham and to Lot by threes, as some representation of this precise mystery." p. 41.

“ baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The second is, 2 Cor. xiii. 14; “ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.”

Now, considering that the doctrine of the Trinity “ may be proved by the very words of the New Testament which explicitly teach it,” it is unfortunate that the learned Lecturer has not produced some text in which the doctrine, and particularly his doctrine, is more clearly taught. It is well that he did not bring forward the heavenly witnesses, the sound of which would have been more to his purpose. But I trust he is ashamed of that justly exploded text. As to the two above recited, the understanding must be pretty well disciplined to “ humble docility,” before it can be brought to see any argument for a Trinity of equal persons in either of them. What proof is there that baptizing into the name of a person is acknowledging him as a God? Was Paul afraid of being thought to set himself up as a God to the Corinthians, if he had baptized in his own name? Or does he mean to say, that when the Israelites were baptized into Moses, they were baptized into a belief that Moses was a God?—And as to the second text—the apostle expresses his wish, that the Corinthians may participate of

the holy spirit; by which if he means spiritual gifts, the wish is perfectly intelligible, and agreeable to the connexion in which it is introduced. But if by the holy spirit he means a person of the Godhead, what are we to understand by the participation of a person?

Perhaps the learned Lecturer will complain (as in p. 23.) that a subject upon which he is very grave has been treated "with an offensive levity, and indecency of style:" but really if gentlemen desire to avoid ridicule they must be careful not to write what is ridiculous. And he must excuse the Unitarians if they treat with contempt his absurd accusations, and his antiquated anathemas. It is better to laugh than to be angry.—If the worn-out giant grins, and growls, it is hard if the pilgrim, conscious of his safety, may not be permitted to smile. In some cases laughter may, indeed, as the poet expresses it, betray "a want of grace; while to be grave exceeds all power of face."

I am, &c.



## LETTER IV.

SIR,

**T**HE subject of the learned Lecturer's third Discourse is, the Godhead of Christ. His statement is (p. 66.): "We hold with all christians," (that is, of course, all who agree with him in opinion,) "that our Lord Jesus Christ is the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father: and we thus proceed to establish that assertion by the "inspired word of God:" which "inspired word of God" means the learned Lecturer's own interpretation of the usual controverted texts.

But so ignorant is this reverend Divine of the state of the controversy, that he actually introduces and comments with no small degree of asperity, upon an observation introduced by the author of 'Letters to the Bishop of London,' for the sole purpose of distinguishing pure Unitarianism from Arianism, with which it has been the fashion of late to confound it, viz. that genuine Unitarians do not allow the existence of "a subordinate Creator and Governor of the Universe." The worthy Lecturer, totally mistaking the drift of the observation, fancies that it is a

charge against the doctrines of the Established Church. "This," says he, (p. 64.) "they plainly "though falsely insinuate that christians hold." And again, p. 86 and p. 100, he asserts, that the "Unitarian advocate," as he is pleased to call the author of the Letters to the Bishop of London, "in the hope of bringing discredit upon the "cause of his opponents, has manifestly charged "us with maintaining the doctrine of a subordinate creator and governor of the universe." That some christians do actually hold this doctrine is unquestionable; for it is the doctrine of the Arians: it was the opinion of Dr. Clarke, who, to say the least, was as great, as learned, and as good a man as the learned Lecturer himself, and in all respects as justly entitled to the venerable name of Christian; though I agree with the learned Lecturer, that in this particular he laboured under a very serious error. But whatever the learned Lecturer may think of it, I can assure him that there are in the world many Christians whose characters stand quite as high as his own, who do not feel themselves called upon to reject from christian communion, or to revile as blasphemers, honest and conscientious men, who think differently from them even upon subjects of acknowledged importance.

It is not compatible with my design to pursue

the learned Lecturer through that string of texts which he has retailed in his discourse, and in the discussion of which he has manifested no extraordinary share of novelty, ingenuity, or learning. He seems to have little critical acquaintance with the Scriptures; and it is surprising at this time of day, that a writer of any pretensions to scriptural knowledge should argue the deity of Christ from Acts xx. 29, "the Church of *God* which he purchased with his own blood," a phrase which Athanasius says was forged by the Arians, and a reading which is not supported by the best and most ancient copies: or (p. 86.) from 1 Tim. iii. 16; "*God* manifest in the flesh:"—an expression unquestionably spurious, and which was never cited by the early writers in the Arian controversy. Nor does he disdain to argue (p. 89.) from a mistranslated passage in the Old Testament, (Exod. iii. 14.) "*God* said to Moses, I am that I am;" compared with a mistranslated passage in the New, (John viii. 58.) Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was I am;"—from which two mistranslations the extravagant conclusion is drawn, that the *man* Jesus, who only professes himself to be the pre-ordained and promised Messiah, was no less than the Supreme Jehovah. And the learned Lecturer has the modesty to impose upon his readers these false readings and gross misinterpretations

as "the inspired word of God." Such manœuvres might pass very well in the ages of ignorance, but that day is over.

There is, however, one text which appears to have fallen under the learned Lecturer's high displeasure, and which he marks repeatedly with tokens of disapprobation. Nor, to say the truth, do I greatly wonder at it, for it is full in the teeth of his favourite doctrines. The author of the 'Letters to the Bishop of London' has stated, that the Unitarians "believe Jesus Christ to be a proper human being, *in all respects like unto his brethren.*" This the learned Lecturer cites as a very obnoxious doctrine, in direct opposition to the doctrine of the Church: and (p. 64.) he marks the words "in all respects" by italics, as being particularly offensive. These words, he tells us (p. 65.), assert that "our Saviour was a *mere* human being,—and they "lose none of their *impiety* by the subsequent admission of Christ's divine mission." To this unfortunate text the learned Lecturer recurs again and again, and always with some note of disapprobation, particularly p. 92: "They seek to degrade our Lord to a mere man" in all respects "like unto his *fellows*. But the falsehood of that "blasphemy has been shown." This is strong language: but to do justice to the learned Lecturer, I do not believe that he knew that it was a pas-

20 112  
 sage of Scripture against which he was fulminating the charges of falsehood, impiety, and blasphemy. But if he will take the trouble to open his New Testament at the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he will find, at the 17th verse, that the writer affirms that "*in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.*" I quite agree with the learned Lecturer, that this doctrine is utterly irreconcilable to that of the Church of England: but for this discrepancy the members of that communion, and not the Unitarians, are responsible.

It would be endless to follow the learned Lecturer through all his trite arguments upon the trite question concerning the Deity of Christ; which, if they were ten times as numerous and as forcible as they are, would all be completely silenced by this single consideration, that it would have been utterly impossible that our Lord's contemporaries, his apostles, his companions and disciples, or that the historians of his life, and miracles, and sufferings, should have written and spoken of him, have conversed with him, and behaved to him with the familiarity which they always manifested, if they believed that the being who appeared to them as a man, with all the accidents and frailties of a human being, was in truth the

very and eternal God. Let us for a moment place ourselves in their situation ; and we shall feel at once, that the instant the amazing truth was communicated to them, their faculties would be absorbed in terror and astonishment ;—no more free conversation ; no more asking of questions ; no more attempts to impose upon him, or to rebuke him : the greatest awe and distance would instantaneously take place, and all the endearing and familiar relations of master, instructor, companion and friend, would be absorbed in the overwhelming apprehension of their Maker and their God.

And what would be the style and manner of those who, under these impressions, should sit down to write the narrative of his life and his miracles, his discourses and his sufferings ? Would three out of four of his historians completely forget the awful fact of his divine nature, and not drop a single hint of it from the beginning to the end of their histories ? Would the rest of the sacred writers have insisted upon this circumstance only incidentally and obscurely ? Would the most direct evidence of the divinity of Christ have been found chiefly in passages at least suspicious, if not notoriously spurious ? Would the great discovery have been left to be spelled out from a text here and another there, which if put together by a pro-

found scholar, and especially by one who was critically versed in the niceties of the Greek article, might to men whose minds were fond of mystery, be made to convey some such dark and hidden meaning? Would it be necessary, in order to establish the astonishing doctrine of the proper deity of Christ, to collect twenty or thirty texts, which, some being rightly, and some, wrongly translated, might appear to countenance it; and to repeat these texts over and over, so that ignorant and inattentive persons might imagine that they recurred in every page of the New Testament? If Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John, and Paul, and Peter, believed "that our Lord Jesus Christ is "the very and eternal God, of one substance with "the Father," could they not have expressed the doctrine in language as plain as that of the learned Lecturer, or any other framer and supporter of creeds and articles whatever? and could they not with equal facility have lavished the charges of falsehood, impiety, and blasphemy, against the impugnors of the faith? I am confident that it is impossible for any person, who reflects calmly and seriously upon the subject, to doubt, that if the doctrine of their Lord's equality with God were true, and made known to the apostles and first believers, their minds would have been so deeply and so powerfully

impressed with the subject, that they would be able to think, and speak, and write of nothing else, and that this great and wonderful doctrine would be blazoned from one end of the New Testament to the other: it would flame in every chapter, it would shine in every page, it would dazzle in every line. That it does not so, that not only pages and chapters, but even whole books of the New Testament, yea, that professed histories of our Lord's life and character, and of the progress and success of his doctrine, of what he was and what he taught, and of what his disciples said and taught of him, should have passed over this great discovery in silence as deep and as total as the silence of the grave, is a demonstration clear as light to every human being whose understanding is not veiled by the grossest prejudice, that these writers had never heard of the divinity of Christ, that it never entered into their conception that the master whom they revered and loved, was the very and eternal God whom they adored and worshipped. All arguments and criticisms, however ingenious, however learned, however recondite, which can be produced in reply to considerations and facts like these, are as chaff before the whirlwind; and like Samson's cords, they fall asunder, as a thread of tow when touched by the fire.

I am, &c.



## LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

**T**HE latter part of the learned Lecturer's third Discourse contains a few *ad captandum* arguments for what is commonly called the doctrine of the *atonement*, whatever is meant by that mysterious phrase, which those who use it commonly take care not to explain. But as I quite agree with the learned Lecturer (p. 92), that "if we set aside" "the Godhead of Christ there is an end at once to" "the doctrine of a sacrifice made by him to atone" "for the sins of all mankind;" and as I regard the Godhead of Christ as a fundamental error in the popular creed, I consider myself as fully absolved from all concern in the controversy concerning the atonement, and willingly leave it to others who may feel more interest in what the learned Lecturer calls "a most comfortable and" "important doctrine," but which I would rather style, a most useless and unfounded corruption of the simplicity of the christian faith.

In the fourth Sermon the learned Lecturer undertakes to prove the "personality of the Holy" "*Ghost*," as the holy spirit is quaintly styled in

modern phrase. What personality means, the learned Lecturer, who is as sparing in definition as he is exuberant in abuse, has not vouchsafed to explain. Whether he means by the word person, with Dr. Sherlock, the individual of a species; or with Dr. Wallis, an external relation; or with bishop Burgess, a non-entity; or with bishop Gastrell, the whole Deity and something more; he has left his readers to divine. Person commonly signifies an intelligent agent; and that the holy spirit is an intelligent agent, distinct from and in all respects equal to the Father, is a doctrine which is now pretty generally exploded by learned and well-informed divines. The arguments may be seen in Lardner's Postscript to his Letter on the Logos; and in many other writers. Where the expression "spirit" or "spirit of God" really signifies person, that person is God the Father. In general the holy spirit is a phrase used to express miraculous powers; as when it is said (Acts. i. 5.) "Ye shall be baptized with the holy spirit." A very odd phrase, if by the holy spirit is meant a person: for how one person can be baptized with another person is a mystery far beyond the reach of plain understandings. And as nothing is more usual than to personify powers, as for example, "The wind bloweth where it will;" the "scripture foreseeing Abraham's faith," and the like, by

which no one is misled so as to believe that either the wind or the scripture is an intelligent and voluntary agent; so no reasonable person can be deceived when miraculous powers are personified, as they often are in the New Testament.

The learned Lecturer is but a poor advocate for his own side of the question: and for his interpolations of the scripture he seldom alleges any better argument than his own confident affirmation, "that so it is, and they who maintain the contrary are infidels and blasphemers (p. 103)." He cites the text, John xv. 26, "even the spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father:" and adds, "a form so unusual must have been employed for some sufficient purpose which it was peculiarly calculated to effect; for to suppose any inaccuracy or oversight in God's word is to suppose imperfections in God himself; which is both impious and impossible."

But (Rom. viii. 26) the apostle uses a different phraseology: "the spirit ITSELF maketh intercession for us." If, then, the former expression *who* proves the spirit to be a person, the latter expression *it*, by parity of reason, proves the spirit to be a quality; otherwise the expression must to say the least be inaccurate: to affirm which, according to the learned Lecturer's reasoning, is to affirm what "is both impious and impossible."

After all, what in the learned Lecturer's estimation is that Word of God, "in which to suppose inaccuracy or oversight is impious and "impossible?" And where is it to be found? Is it in the Vatican, or the Alexandrine, or the Ephrem, or the Cambridge manuscript of the Scriptures? or is it in the Syriac, or the Vulgate, or the Arabic version? Is it in the text of the Complutensian edition, or in that of Erasmus, or Stephens, or Beza?—None of these however are, or pretend to be, clear of "inaccuracy or "oversight." In short, I strongly suspect that the book, to which the learned Lecturer appeals as the Word of God, in which it is both "impious and impossible to suppose inaccuracy or "oversight," and to the decisions of which all must bow, is neither more nor less than the Elzevir text, *done* into English by king James's translators, and expounded by those exquisite theologians the Bampton Lecturers. And certainly when this text so translated and so expounded, has established its claim to be "the inspired word of God, "without inaccuracy and without oversight," I for one shall be disposed to receive it with the most humble docility, and if not with the lowest prostration, at least, with the most diligent exercise of the understanding. In the mean time I must beg leave to suspend my judgment, and to search out the pure uncorrupted word of God in the best

way that my humble means will permit, and with the utmost attention, seriousness, and impartiality; looking for direction and assistance to the Father of Lights; forming my conclusions according to the information which I possess; and leaving to others the same unmolested exercise of their private judgment, which I claim for myself as my own best privilege, my sacred and inalienable birthright.

It is useless and would appear invidious to pursue the learned Lecturer into all the trifling and inconclusive arguments by which he labours to prove the distinct personality of the Holy *Ghost*. The subject has often been treated by much abler advocates. The sum of the controversy is this: It is universally admitted on the one hand that the holy spirit or *ghost*, as the learned Lecturer reads it, often expresses miraculous gifts or powers, and nothing more: On the other side, it cannot be denied that personal terms are occasionally applied to the holy spirit. The literal interpreter will of course suppose the existence of a personal agent; but the liberal and judicious critic, whose mind is thoroughly imbued with just notions of the absolute unity of God, will find no difficulty in understanding the personifying language of the sacred writers, and will be no more inclined to believe the holy spirit to be a person, because men

are exhorted not to grieve him; than to believe that it is fire, because they are exhorted not to quench it; or water, because the spirit is said to be poured out, and men to be baptized with it.

The fifth Sermon treats on the "Judgment by our Saviour." Upon this question little needs to be said, because the learned Lecturer acknowledges (p. 131) that the Unitarians believe "that Christ will indeed judge the world." But he quarrels with them, first, because they conceive that the sublime and infinitely important doctrines of the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment, constitute the sum and substance of the christian revelation. "Whereas," says he (p. 132), "we hold something more than this. That life and immortality are brought to light by Jesus Christ, is the doctrine both of them and ourselves. The difference lies in this, that we hold them to have been brought to light through the Gospel, through belief of all the revelations, and practice of all the duties therein made known and enjoined." If in this instance there be a difference between us, I own I cannot discover it: for the Unitarians to a man all believe the same.—And the second charge which the learned Lecturer alleges against them they peremptorily deny, and challenge him to prove. His words are (p. 133.):

"Of which revealed truths the foundation stone  
 "is this,—which they deny,—namely, that Jesus  
 "Christ the Son of God 'is come in the flesh.'  
 Now so far are the Unitarians from denying this  
 doctrine, that I will venture to say, that there is  
 not an Unitarian in the world who does not be-  
 lieve it in the very sense in which the apostle  
 intended it. Not indeed in the sense in which  
 the Bampton Lecturer expounds it, viz. that  
 "Christ the eternal and omnipotent Son, one of  
 "the three persons, who in entire equality com-  
 "pose the unity of the godhead, is come in the  
 "form of the man Jesus." And though, with all  
 the confidence of inspiration, the learned Lectu-  
 rer pronounces, "This is the signification of St.  
 "John's expression, that Christ is come in the  
 "flesh;" I presume to demur to his infallibility:  
 and I humbly conceive, that an idea so subtle, so  
 abstruse, so metaphysical and incomprehensible,  
 never entered into the unlettered apostle's thoughts:  
 and that all he could mean by his plain periphrasis  
 was, that Christ was a real man made of flesh  
 and blood like other men, and not a phantom as  
 the *Docetæ* absurdly taught. And the expression  
 "coming in the flesh" no more implies that he  
 might have come some other way, than the ex-  
 pression "born of a woman" implies that a man  
 might be born some other way: or, that when St.

Paul speaks of his kindred "according to the flesh," it implies that he might have kindred some other way. The pleonasm is neither uncommon nor unintelligible.

The learned Lecturer, however, is so confident that he is himself in the right, that he goes on, page after page, denouncing the Unitarians as "insolent blasphemers," because they interpret the scriptures in a different manner from himself; and always represents them as arrogantly rejecting his favourite doctrine of the union of the divine and human nature in Christ Jesus, because they feel it to be beyond their reason to comprehend it: "The unbeliever," for this is the title with which he commonly brands the Unitarian, "The unbeliever," ( says he, p. 140.) "on the contrary, " feels it to be beyond his reason to comprehend " this mystery, and *therefore* insolently rejects it: " and thinks to get clear of the question by a " profane sneer at the idea of a God-man. It is " never to be forgotten, it can scarcely be enough " impressed, that a christian *must* be meek and " lowly in heart: he *must* take God's revelations " thankfully, even as they are; and never imagine " himself at liberty to reject or modify, because " he may not understand them."—To this description of the humble spirit of a sincere believer, the Unitarians willingly assent. But, in the first



place, they peremptorily deny that they reject any doctrine merely because it is incomprehensible; and, secondly, they beg permission to discriminate between the dictum of a Bampton Lecturer however authoritative and dogmatical, and the inspired word of God.

Upon the whole, it cannot be disputed that the scriptures represent our Lord as the MAN by whom the world is to be judged—they speak of his proper humanity, as that which peculiarly qualifies him for this high office: “God has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man.” (John v. 27.) The apostles are also described as his coadjutors upon this solemn occasion (Matt. xix. 28): “When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” And the apostle Paul appeals to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 2): “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?” The import of this prophetic language it is perhaps impossible for us fully to comprehend, and is such as nothing but the awful reality can explain. It is evident, however, that whatever is signified by “judging the world,” it means nothing more than what a man may by divine appointment and energy be qualified to perform; and that the apostles

and even christians in general are to be associated with Jesus upon the grand occasion. And this consideration allows room for the conjecture, that possibly no personal interposition even of Jesus himself may be intended. But as prophets are said to perform what they only predict, (see Jer. i. 10.) so Jesus may be said to judge the world, because he has solemnly and authoritatively announced that God will judge it: and apostles and saints may be said to be associated with him in this high office, because the apostles, by authority from Christ himself, and believers in all ages by their doctrine and example, bear their solemn and united testimony to this grand consummation of the divine government. But it becomes us not to be dogmatical on so mysterious a subject, but rather to be mindful of our own important duty, to give all diligence to be found of our Judge in peace.

The learned Lecturer, finding himself at the end of his argument before he had got to the end of his discourse, employs the latter half of his Sermon in alleging a number of texts to prove the deity of Christ, and in venting his wrath upon the Unitarians who presume to interpret them differently. It would be useless and endless to follow him through all his misinterpretations and perversions of scripture language, many of which

must have been advanced with great confidence in the ignorance or indulgence of his audience. He absurdly argues the deity of Christ (p. 148) from John iii. 13, "The Son of man who is in heaven:"—"a declaration," says he, "of which if his two natures, divine and human, be denied, if it be a mean equivocation to speak of one distinctly from the other, no tolerable sense can possibly be made: the dreadful impiety of which supposition no true and devout christian can contemplate without abhorrence and detestation." The clause is probably spurious: but to doubt the authenticity of the received text is always, in the learned writer's estimation, impiety, infidelity, and blasphemy. But granting it to be genuine, let the learned writer look into the comments of Dr. Clarke, of bishop Pearce, and of archbishop Newcome, all of them as sincere christians and as devout as himself, and let him blush at his own intemperance and presumption.

That any person with the New Testament in his hand should ever have delivered before a learned auditory, or that he should ever venture to print and publish the following sentence (p. 152), appears to me not a little extraordinary: "The Unitarians do away all his title to real and proper deity. They act thus in the face of all that evidence which was miraculously given

“ throughout the ministry of Jesus in proof of  
 “ the truth of *his assertions*, that he was himself  
 “ the very and eternal God ; one and the same in  
 “ Deity with the Father, though distinct in per-  
 “ sonality as the Son.” With what eyes does the  
 learned Lecturer read the New Testament? Where  
 does the humble Jesus ever make these stupendous  
 assertions? Where does he inculcate these subtle  
 distinctions?—Does the learned Lecturer really  
 think that, when our Lord was so very cautious  
 of discovering himself to be the Messiah, he at  
 the same time made no hesitation in declaring  
 himself to be “ the very and eternal God?” and  
 can he really believe that the apostles, in all their  
 familiar intercourse with him, knew that their  
 Master and their Friend, who ate and drank and  
 conversed with them, was “ the same in Deity  
 “ with the Father, though distinct in persona-  
 “ lity as the Son?” To how humble a level must  
 the learned Lecturer have subdued his understand-  
 ing, if he can give credit to such incredible  
 things!

The Sermon concludes with charging the Uni-  
 tarians with arguing from a few insulated texts, in  
 opposition to the general strain and current of  
 the Scripture. “ These,” says he ( p. 156 ), “ are  
 “ plain and direct inferences, consistent with the  
 “ whole tenor of the gospel. They can hardly be

" by this time unknown to the Unitarians. And  
 " we cannot be too much upon our guard against  
 " presumptuous men, who strive to uphold the  
 " opinions they have taken up, in contradiction to  
 " the general teaching of God's word, by over-  
 " strained constructions of *insulated and detached*  
 " passages of holy writ. Such has ever been the  
 " *infidel's* constant method . . . . Against the gene-  
 " ral and harmonious evidence of the whole go-  
 " spel, the Unitarian *arrays a few selected and mu-*  
 " *tilated passages*, which, if taken singly, may bear  
 " a sound which shall seem to concur with his fa-  
 " vourite opinions: and he rests his whole system  
 " on them, without taking into account the tenor  
 " of our Saviour's doctrine in general, as delivered  
 " by himself and his apostles . . . The Socinians  
 " must know that their method of torturing the  
 " words of scripture, in order to force a particular  
 " interpretation upon them, would not be endured  
 " if they were so to treat the common writings of  
 " men. And they show more respect for their  
 " own conceits than for God's revelations, when  
 " they force and misconstrue his holy word, that  
 " they may represent it as utterly inconsistent with  
 " itself, rather than bend their pride to bow to a  
 " doctrine which they cannot comprehend, though  
 " it be plainly revealed and expressly sanctioned  
 " by the word of the Most High."

It is really surprising that any person who lives

in the civilized world, and makes pretensions to decorum of character, should think himself authorized to lavish such unqualified abuse upon persons who are as sincere in their profession of the christian religion as himself, and whose characters will not shrink from a comparison with the most virtuous of his own party, and to charge them with pride, conceit, presumption, and infidelity, because they think differently from himself upon certain abstruse and unintelligible doctrines, and interpret certain obscure texts in a different way. Is it possible that a man, who is not wholly immured in the precincts of a college, can be so totally ignorant of what is passing in the world, as to imagine that his cause will be benefited by such a mode of defence? or that he does not degrade himself and his works in the estimation of every reader of sound understanding, by such unprovoked and unfounded abuse? When will these gentlemen learn that they live in an age in which hard words will not supply the place of sound argument?

As to the main charge, that Unitarians argue from insulated texts, in opposition to the general tenor of scripture, the learned Lecturer, according to his usual custom, has very judiciously abstained from producing proof.—And I will venture to say that proof is impossible: for the re-

verse of the charge is the plain, palpable, uncontrovertible truth. The Unitarians, forsooth, "array" a few selected and mutilated passages against the "general and harmonious evidence of the whole gospel!"—Yes, Dr. Moysey, they do *select*, and they do *array*, the whole gospel of Matthew, and the whole gospel of Mark, and the whole gospel of Luke, and the whole history of the Acts, and the whole of the two epistles to the Corinthians, and the whole epistle to the Galatians, and the whole epistle to the Ephesians, and the two epistles to the Thessalonians, and the two epistles to Timothy, (notwithstanding the spurious reading of "God manifest in the flesh,") and the whole epistle to Titus and to Philemon, and the whole epistle of James, and the two epistles of Peter, and the whole of the three epistles of John, (notwithstanding the notorious and abominable interpolation of the heavenly witnesses,) and finally, the whole epistle of Jude;—these *insulated* and *detached* books the Unitarians do *select* and do *array*: and they challenge their Trinitarian brethren to produce a single passage, from beginning to end, in any one of them, which contains any thing like the doctrine of a trinity of persons in a unity of essence. And against what do they *select* and *array* these sacred writings?—Against the rest of the books of the New Testament? No, no! very, very far from it. They

*select* and *array* them against the misconception and misinterpretation of a few passages in the gospel of John, who is a very mystical and figurative writer; against a difficult passage or two in the epistle to the Romans; against the obscurity of some rhetorical passages in the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians; against the fanciful and misunderstood analogies of the unknown writer to the Hebrews; and against the difficulties occurring in the prophetic language of the Apocalypse. But of each of these books by far the greater portion speaks the purest Unitarianism. The doctrine of the Trinity derives no countenance from a single sentence through the whole New Testament; and that of the deity of Christ derives its support from a small number of mistaken and misinterpreted texts; while that of the proper unity of God, in person as well as in essence, and that of the simple humanity of Jesus Christ, shine forth with a resplendence that he who runs may read. So much for the learned Lecturer's charge, "that Unitarians argue only from a few selected and mutilated passages, against the general and harmonious evidence of the whole gospel."

I am, &c.



## LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

THE title of the Bampton Lecturer's sixth Sermon is, "On the Inspiration of the Scripture." But had the title been "On the Humility and Charity" of the Lecturer himself, it would perhaps have been more appropriate; as he only introduces a few superficial observations at the beginning concerning his professed subject, while the tenor of the discourse from beginning to end is a remarkable exemplification of the latter. In truth, the whole of this extraordinary composition is one uninterrupted strain of declamatory invective and low abuse of the Unitarians in general, and particularly of the Editors of the Improved Version, wantonly loading them with the most scandalous charges, without giving himself the trouble to advance the shadow of a proof to sustain his gross accusations. It is hard to explain how a person who has the least regard to character should have been betrayed into so disgraceful a conduct.

If what this pious ecclesiastic asserts is true, the Editors of the Improved Version are the most impious and shameless impostors who ever under-

took to deceive the public; and their folly is equal to their fraud. For, according to this gentleman, having first formed a system of their own, which they call Christianity, but which they know is not such, they resolve to bend the Scriptures to their own purpose. To this end, having selected a text with which few readers were acquainted, the text of Griesbach, and a Version, of which few copies were in circulation, the Version of archbishop Newcome, they published what they were pleased to call an Improved Version of their own, in which they have most falsely and fraudulently corrupted and perverted the text both of Griesbach and of Newcome, for the sole and express purpose of adapting the language of the New Testament to their own antichristian and blasphemous doctrines;—publishing the whole as the genuine text both of Griesbach and Newcome, and designedly omitting to notice the alterations which they have made in many important passages, though they set out with a distinct profession that every deviation from the text of their originals shall be noticed in the margin.

Such is the accusation which the Rev. C. A. Moysey, D.D., rector of Walcot, and so forth, has preferred at the bar of an impartial and enlightened public against the Editors of the Improved Version. And this charge, thus publicly

produced, I, in the name of those Editors, as publicly aver to be unfounded and unproved. I further aver that the charge is totally false, malicious, and calumnious. I challenge the reverend accuser to produce a single proof of wilful and deliberate perversion of the Scriptures in the whole of that voluminous work. If he can prove his accusation, let the names of the editors be blasted with everlasting infamy. But if he cannot make good a single charge, and I am sure he cannot, let the unjust accuser redeem his own character in the best way he is able.

Had the accusation been merely a charge of ignorance or inattention, had blunder upon blunder been detected and exposed, the Editors of the Improved Version might have borne the reproach in silence, and ought thankfully to have corrected the error of which they had been convicted. But when they are publicly and rudely charged with purposely and fraudulently falsifying and corrupting the Scriptures, in order to support doctrines which they know to be unscriptural and erroneous, and when they are thus accused by persons of some character and estimation in the world; conscious of their perfect innocence of all and of every part of the foul and scandalous imputation, they have a right to repel it with indignation, and to call upon their unprovoked

and ungenerous adversaries to make good their allegations, or to retract their false accusations, and to retire with disgrace.

But that I may not incur the blame which I attribute to the reverend Lecturer, of imputing charges which he cannot substantiate, I shall select a few passages from the Discourse before me, to justify the statement which I have made, and which will show to what a degree of abasement and self-degradation a gentleman and a scholar—for such I presume Dr. Moysey to be—may sink, when bitten with the demoniacal phrensy of religious intolerance.

Page 165. “ The Unitarians,” says he, “ object to the plenary inspiration of the scriptures, “ not on account of such passages as evidently do “ not require particular inspiration, but because “ in disavowing the inspiration of the Bible they “ open a way, as they imagine, for the rejection, “ or alteration, or mutilation of any texts of scripture which militate most strongly against their “ system. Like the Pharisees of old, they make the “ commandment of God of none effect; and by “ an art more unjustifiable even than theirs. The “ Pharisees had indeed a tradition, which set itself up to oppose, and even to overrule, the “ written law. But they never presumed to “ change or falsify the words of that law. They

“ did not presume to call that the word of the  
 “ Lord which they had substituted for his word.  
 “ But these Unitarians, as they call themselves by  
 “ way of distinction, avowing respect for the go-  
 “ spel, seek, by impeaching its integrity, to un-  
 “ dermine and overthrow it; and being *fully*  
 “ *aware that its doctrine opposed theirs*, ARBITRA-  
 “ RILY cut down, disguise, and pervert its pecu-  
 “ liar and essential truths. They profess at the  
 “ same time to publish a more true and correct  
 “ version of that which they cannot possibly be  
 “ ignorant that they have corrupted and mutilated  
 “ in the most *audacious, fraudulent, and unjustifi-*  
 “ *able* manner. Strong as these expressions may  
 “ appear,” [strong indeed, good Dr. Moysey,]  
 “ I doubt not but that every one who shall at all  
 “ have examined into their New and Improved  
 “ Version has found them to be not only justified  
 “ by the treatment which the word of God has  
 “ received at their hands, but rendered absolutely  
 “ necessary by the *deceitful* professions which they  
 “ hold out, to draw in those who are not aware of  
 “ their dishonest arts.”

Again, p. 168. “The Version of the Archbishop  
 “ whom they profess to follow is in few hands;  
 “ and it might be believed by those who have not  
 “ seen it, that all their alterations are copied from  
 “ thence. This is obviously their reason for hold-

“ing up his version as their model, when, in truth,  
 “they have departed even from it in many very  
 “**MATERIAL** instances, *without any notice given of*  
 “such variation. Nor have they dealt more faith-  
 “fully with the Greek text in that edition which  
 “they profess to hold in such estimation.”

Again, p. 170. “There is too much reason to  
 “suspect that they selected Griesbach’s Text for  
 “the same reason as Archbishop Newcome’s Ver-  
 “sion, and that they professed to follow both, be-  
 “cause they were less generally known, and there-  
 “fore their deviations from them less likely to be  
 “detected. If we may judge from the actions of  
 “this sect, we shall discover but little reverence  
 “for the word of God, which they *presume to*  
 “*set aside* in so many instances, that they may  
 “find a place for their own opinions in contra-  
 “diction to it. Nor can it be too much to assert  
 “this, when we find them departing from that  
 “which is received, and which they profess to  
 “receive as the genuine text, whenever it suits  
 “their purpose so to do, on their own single au-  
 “thority, and *frequently without any notice of such*  
 “*variation*. Such conduct, when we consider the  
 “professions held out by them, of always giving  
 “intimations of any departure from their models,  
 “can be accounted for nothing better than *wilful*  
 “*and fraudulent deception*.”

I confess I cannot read and transcribe these passages without feeling the greatest astonishment that a writer, who has any character to lose, can commit himself to advance charges so gross and so unqualified; and that he can repeat and insist upon them again and again, without producing, or being able to produce, a shadow of proof. Surely the reverend writer has himself forgotten his own solemn admonition, (p. 140,) which he says "ought never to be forgotten, and can scarcely be "enough impressed, that a christian must be meek "and lowly in heart." What, then, are Bampton Lecturers not christians? or is there an exception in their behoof? Be it so. I do not envy them their privilege. And I trust that how much soever my indignation may be excited by the virulence of such a writer as Dr. Moysey, it will never provoke me to a retaliation of abuse. In the present case I shall only expose the learned Lecturer's conduct, let others give it what name they please. He alleges no proof: but I know where he thinks that his *great strength* lies. I can assure him, however, that he will find that he is leaning upon a broken reed. But of this hereafter. At present we are only stating the indictment; the defence will follow.

It is surprising that it should not have occurred to the reverend accuser, that the Editors of the

Improved Version, if they were really guilty of those gross and palpable mutilations and perversions of the scripture which he imputes to them, would be not only the basest but the weakest of mankind. If they had thus fraudulently and audaciously imposed their own forgeries as the text of Griesbach and the version of Newcome, could they ever have flattered themselves that they should escape detection, or that they should not be immediately exposed to the scorn and ignominy which their conduct deserved? It is impossible. Even folly herself could never have expected it.

“But,” says the reverend accuser, “they professed to follow Griesbach’s text and Archbishop Newcome’s version because they were less generally known, and therefore their deviations from them less likely to be detected.” What! a doctor of divinity of the University of Oxford talk of the text of Griesbach as not being generally known! Let me assure him that, in the year 1808, when the Improved Version was first published, the edition of Griesbach was in the hands of every biblical scholar, some Bampton Lecturers perchance excepted. The first edition, published in 1775 and 1777, had long been disposed of; and of the second and highly improved edition, the first volume had been in possession of the scriptural student from the year 1796; and



the second volume, which had been delayed ten years for the invaluable communications of professor Birch, had been published two years before; and through the munificent patronage of the late illustrious and venerable and truly pious Duke of Grafton had been very extensively circulated. And though, by an unfortunate accident, a considerable number of the copies of the Primate's version were lost, a large proportion were still preserved, amply sufficient to have detected and exposed the Editors of the Improved Version, if they had been foolish and wicked enough to have been guilty of the impious and audacious fraud imputed to them by their reverend accuser.

And what motive can reasonably be assigned to these abused and calumniated Editors, which could induce them to act so base and foolish a part? Men do not usually act without a sufficient reason; and where the crime is great the temptation is proportionable. If indeed mitres and croziers had danced before the eyes of these reprobated Editors; if deaneries and bishoprics had awaited them as the prize of their laborious and iniquitous exertions to support a tottering and unrighteous cause, frail human nature might possibly have given way. They might have been induced to falsify and prevaricate, and against their better knowledge they might have been led to per-

vert and to corrupt the word of God:—they might have been tempted to tamper with the sacred text; and, in defiance of all evidence, to retain notorious interpolations as genuine readings, in order to impose upon the ignorant, and to support popular and established errors:—they might eagerly have contended for gross mistranslations which they knew to be erroneous, but which, in sound at least, were favourable to the popular system:—they might have tortured and wrested the genuine and figurative language of scripture to a sense which they well knew to be the reverse of its real meaning, in order to support a cause which it was their interest to defend;—and with the utmost exertion of ingenuity and industry, and the most pompous display of learning, they might have laboured to advocate the faulty translation of a faulty text, and to oppose with the utmost vehemence and bitterness every attempt at improvement; and meanly to depreciate the qualifications, to asperse the motives, and to calumniate the characters of those who, with the best intentions, in the calmest and most inoffensive language and manner, and from the best authorities, endeavoured to correct the text and to improve the version.

That such might have been the conduct of the Editors of the Improved Version, if temptations

sufficiently powerful had fallen in their way, I will not pretend to deny; for they were men, and to the frailties of human nature they were undoubtedly liable. But their situation was widely different. They were and could be under no temptation to the crime with which they are charged. For had they been weak enough to expect that their numerous fraudulent and audacious corruptions of the sacred text would have been unobserved or unnoticed by their ignorant brethren, and by their too indulgent adversaries, what could they have looked for as the result of their successful fraud? They would still have been exposed to public obloquy. They would still have been marked as the ringleaders of a sect which had forfeited the name of christian; which denies, and labours to subvert, the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; which deserves to be placed under the ban of society, and to be deprived of the common rights and privileges of free-born Britons; and finally, they would still have been regarded as main supporters of that God-denying heresy, against which every one who looks for advancement in the church, from the curate to the prelate, must tilt his lance, and in conflict with which even the stripling in theology must flesh his ecclesiastical sword, before the gate of preferment can be unlocked for his admission.

And are these the motives which would induce men of common understanding, and of decency of character, audaciously and presumptuously, in the face of the whole world, in a learned and inquisitive age, to commit a most palpable, impious, and atrocious fraud;—a fraud which must necessarily be detected the instant that it was published; and the detection of which would inevitably expose the perpetrators of it to public and everlasting infamy? It is impossible! The very supposition of it is a contradiction to all the moral feelings and the best principles of human nature; and, what is more, to all the established laws of the human mind, which are as fixed and unalterable as the laws which keep the planets in their orbits. It is therefore a contradiction in terms, that the Editors of the Improved Version, if they possessed the intellect and the feelings of men, should, under the circumstances in which they published that work, have been guilty of that deliberate, fraudulent, and impious corruption of the sacred text, to subserve their own wicked designs, with which they are openly, and in the most unqualified manner, charged by the Bampton Lecturer.

I am, &c,

## LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR,

**I**N the present letter I propose to give you a few particulars of the history of the Improved Version of the New Testament, and of the object of its publication ; after which I shall expose the extreme futility of the learned Lecturer's objections to it ; though, to do him justice, I firmly believe that he has never seen the work itself, but has taken up his idea of it from the misrepresentations of others. For though I have no personal knowledge of Dr. Moysey, yet, from his education and from his rank and station in society, I cannot allow myself to suspect that, if he had looked into the Improved Version, he would deliberately and knowingly have published those gross falsehoods and unfounded calumnies which occupy so large a proportion of his edifying Discourses\*.

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\* Gentlemen would save themselves and their readers some trouble and many mistakes, though perhaps it might not quite so well answer their purpose, if they would have the goodness to look into the Improved Version before they favour the world with their animadversions upon it. For want of atten-

In the year 1791 a Society was formed, which assumed the title of "The Unitarian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge by the Distribution of Books;" and from its first institution it was a primary object of this Society to publish an Improved Version of the New Testament. One main design of this version avowedly was, to deprive the popular system of the support which it derives from the incorrect text and erroneous in-

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tion to this equitable and useful rule, the learned Dr. Laurence, of the University of Oxford, in his "Critical Reflections" upon what he calls "The Unitarian Version of the New Testament," has fallen into a most egregious error, and in the fervour of his zeal to correct the supposed misrepresentations of others, he becomes guilty of the most gross and palpable misrepresentation himself.

Almost ten pages of Dr. Laurence's Introductory Remarks are occupied in severe and unsparing animadversions upon the Editors of the Improved Version, for having altered the text by critical conjecture, in two very important passages, (John i. 1. and Rom. ix. 5.) and adapted it to their own theological opinions, without the authority of any one manuscript or version, or of any one ancient ecclesiastical writer; and in direct contradiction to the judgment of Michaelis, to whose celebrated work they appeal, and whose rules of criticism they profess to adopt. And after having quoted several passages from that eminent critic, in which he expresses the strongest disapprobation of admitting conjectural criticism into the text of the New Testament, Dr. Laurence concludes with the following sarcastic remark, (p. 13.) "As it is impossible to expose their reasoning more strongly than the critic himself has

terpretations of King James's translators. This plan the Society was, by various impediments, prevented from carrying into effect till the year 1806, when they came to a resolution to set about it immediately; and to this end formed a committee, consisting of a certain number of well educated laymen, and of all the ministers who were members of the Society. The first question

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“done to whom they appeal for support, and that even in the  
 “very chapter which they quote, I shall add nothing more upon  
 “the subject, but leave them to enjoy as they can the testi-  
 “mony of Michaelis.”

Courteous reader!—Would you believe it? The Editors have not in a single instance admitted conjectural criticism into the text: they entered their protest against it in their Introductory Remarks: they appealed to Michaelis as themselves cordially adopting his sentiments upon the subject; nor have they ever infringed upon their rule and his, even “where very plausible conjectures of no inconsiderable importance have been suggested by men of great learning and sagacity, which, to say the least, merit very attentive consideration. See particularly John i. 1. vi. 4. Rom. ix. 5.”

So it is that the Editors of the Improved Version are treated. Gentlemen, men of learning and eminence, whose word with the multitude passes for law, without taking the trouble to examine, do not scruple to hazard assertions which are erroneous in the extreme, and allege charges against the Editors which are utterly unfounded, but which are too generally believed. But the enemies of truth are greatly mistaken if they expect by these ungenerous means to suppress its progress, and to subdue its immortal energies.

was, whether the version should be entirely new, or whether some existing version should be taken as the basis of the work, and alterations be made in it only in those passages where it might be deemed erroneous, or where the author might be thought to be misled by his attachment to theological system. The latter was for two reasons preferred : first, because upon this plan the work would be sooner finished : and secondly and principally, that the adversary might have no reason to say, as he certainly would be inclined to do, that the Unitarians had warped the language of the scriptures to adapt it to their own purposes.

The Version which they selected for their purpose was that of the learned and liberal prelate Archbishop Newcome ; and the reasons for this selection were, first, that the Archbishop professed to translate from the corrected text of Griesbach : and secondly, that his version, though not perfect, was a great improvement upon the common translation, and would therefore require fewer alterations. Also, a great number of copies having been damaged in coming over from Ireland, comparatively few were left for sale, and the book was not likely to be reprinted. The bookseller, who alone was interested in the profits of the work, readily gave his consent. Nor was it contem-



plated that any serious objection could rise from any other quarter, especially as it was enjoined upon the Editors, wherever they differed from the Primate's version, to make a note of it in the margin, and to set down the Primate's own words, with his initial at the end, so as to make it impossible for a reader of common attention and understanding to mistake their Version for that of the Primate: and to this rule they have rigidly adhered, though here and there they may be chargeable with an oversight. And notwithstanding the insolent and outrageous imputations to the contrary, they boldly challenge their most sharp-sighted and most inveterate adversaries to produce a single omission, of which there can be the least pretence to say that it was voluntary, or more than three or four which are of any material importance. And where the number of variations is so considerable, a little candour,—if Unitarians could expect candour,—would make a liberal allowance for a few unintentional inadvertencies and errors. Much has been said about the deviations from the text of Griesbach, which, by a writer in the Monthly Repository, have been computed at several hundreds. The fact is, that in their first editions the Editors followed the text of Newcome, who used Griesbach's first edition, the Editors only adding a few of the most mate-

rial variations contained in Griesbach's second edition. So that it may truly be said that their text agrees with the text of Griesbach in every particular of importance: for mere verbal variations, of which it is well known that various readings chiefly consist, are comparatively of little value. However, in the last edition of the Improved Version, published in 1817, in consequence of the very accurate collation of a late learned and lamented friend, the Rev. T. B. Broadbent, the text of the Improved Version exhibits a correct representation of the Griesbach text, and notes its variations from the received or Elzevir text, in the same way as it notes the variations from Newcome's version. In the course of this laborious process my young friend found abundance of errors in the collations contained in the Repository; and no doubt others may find some in his, for in such minutiae it is almost impossible not to fall into mistake; and they who severely censure these peccadillos, show themselves to be egregiously deficient both in sense and candour. An approximation to perfect correctness is all that can reasonably be expected.

Great censure has been attached to the liberty that is taken of using the Archbishop's translation without the permission of his representatives: and the late Bishop of Waterford, Dr. Stock, bro-

ther-in-law to the Primate, wrote me a very polite and very mild letter of expostulation upon the subject. But really this kind of liberty with the works of deceased authors is so common, that it almost ceases to be regarded as an offence; and the Editors of the Improved Version do not see why they are to be branded as sinners *above all the Galileans*. Did not Dr. Stock himself make Bishop Lowth's translation of Isaiah the basis of his own? Mr. Dodson most certainly did; and transcribes Bishop Lowth, page after page, without notice. Dr. Sturges defends the Prelate's version against some of the remarks of Mr. Dodson; but he writes in the spirit of a gentleman, and does not revile his opponent as a plagiarist. Dr. Geddes's version of the Psalms is little more than a translation of Dathius, yet he passes uncensured. Not many years ago, four gentlemen of great literary eminence published a collection of Psalms and Hymns for public worship, in which they have altered at their own discretion the hymns of Watts, Doddridge, &c., and even of some living authors, annexing the names of the authors to the mutilated hymns without specifying the alterations. This is going, if not too far, at least far beyond the Editors of the Improved Version; yet Dr. Kippis, one of the editors of this collection, avows the liberty taken with the authors; and in defence of it he says nothing

more than that "without taking it, their plan "could not have been executed in the manner "intended." Where, then, is the great harm of selecting Archbishop Newcome's Translation as the basis of the Improved Version? It was out of print; the Primate was deceased; his representatives were unknown; his bookseller encouraged the scheme; and the greatest care was taken, by marking the variations, to relieve the Primate of the responsibility of what he had not written himself. And, to say the truth, the Editors of the Improved Version claim some merit for having rescued from oblivion, and having been the means of introducing to the knowledge and esteem of many thousand readers, a very excellent and valuable Version, which, had it not been for their exertions, would soon have been lost, or only found in the cabinets of the curious, or the libraries of collectors.

Why, then, do the adversaries of the Unitarians inveigh so bitterly against the Editors of the Improved Version, for a work which really merits praise? Perhaps, in addition to the consideration that all things done by Unitarians must be wrong, one reason may be, that the learned objectors, not having knowledge or discrimination sufficient to distinguish between the text of the Editors and that of the Primate, are sometimes found

abusing the latter, when they mean only to vilify the former: thus reminding us of the courtly compliment of the mayor of Coventry to Queen Elizabeth, that "when the king of Spain attacked her majesty he took the wrong sow by the ear\*."

It cannot surely be seriously urged as an objection against the Improved Version, that the Editors, in the notes, have given what appeared to them the true interpretation of disputed texts, generally assigning reasons or authorities for the explanations which they have given. They have no hesitation to avow that this was the main design of their publication; and happy are they to find that it has so well answered its end. They desired to put their readers into possession of what they conceived to be the true sense and meaning of the sacred text, in opposition to all unsound

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\* Good Dr. Laurence, who is ever upon the watch lest, as he *elegantly* expresses it, "passages should be so twisted by the tortuous lubricity of theological comment, as to elude the grasp of indignant criticism," meaning to be very severe upon the Editors of the Improved Version, has unwittingly dealt some heavy strokes to the learned and amiable Primate. See p. 75, 77, 80. No wonder that gentlemen object to the plan of the Improved Version, when it leads them into such awkward mistakes!

and unscriptural interpretations whatever. And they had a right to use their liberty in this way : as good a right as Calvin, or Beza, or Whitby, or Doddridge, or Lowth, or any other expositor, whether within or without the pale of the established church. They are also bold to affirm, that while they have advanced what they believed to be the truth, fearlessly and without disguise, they have done it in the most temperate and inoffensive manner. And they challenge their opponents to produce a single instance in which they have launched out into invectives, or cast any reflection upon the character either of individuals or of parties, merely upon account of a difference of judgment in explaining those scriptures, which all agree to revere as the repositories of revealed truth. Why, then, are the Editors to be reviled and calumniated, instead of being reasoned with and answered? *Because they can't be answered.*

The title of an "Improved Version" has to many given great offence ; but without reason. Had the Version been wholly their own, such a title might have savoured of vanity in the Editors. But when it is considered that more than nine-tenths of the whole is the translation of the Primate, and that the alterations, where they have been thought necessary, have com-

monly been taken from Lardner, Cappe, Wakefield, or some other eminent critic, the title will not appear so indecorous as many apprehend. And to say the truth, though the common version possesses great merit, considering the age when it was made, and though it is regarded by many with a veneration only due to inspiration, the means of improving both the text and the translation have accumulated to such a degree in the last two hundred years, that to say of any modern version that it is an improvement upon that of King James's translators, who used a copy carelessly formed from manuscripts of little note, and who laboured under the prejudices of an age just emerging from barbarism, is at best but moderate praise\*.

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\* "Do the Articles of the Church of England want revision?" says the late excellent Bishop Watson. "Undoubtedly. What should you think of a comment annexed two hundred years ago by a learned man or two to particular passages of a book *printed from the worst manuscripts*, written in a strange language, and in a style wholly different from that which prevails in Europe? You would not, I am convinced, suppose that this comment could receive no amendment from *emendations of the text itself*, no illustration from a more intimate acquaintance with the style of the original, no light from the labours of learning employed for above two centuries in studying the history of those people, nor from the observations of travellers upon their manners." Bp. Watson's Miscel. Tracts, p. 25.

I now proceed to give a few specimens of the learned Lecturer's specific objections to particular passages in the Improved Version; from which we shall soon learn to estimate the calibre of the reverend gentleman's qualifications as a Scripture critic, and his right to assume the high tone of censure and rebuke, by which he seeks to impose upon men of "humble docility" and "prostrate understandings."

1. The learned Lecturer (p. 172.) retails the charge, which has been repeatedly alleged and refuted, viz. that the Editors of the Improved Version "cite Lardner to show that the account "given in the Gospels is erroneous, and that our "Lord was not born till after Herod's death." He adds, "that Lardner has asserted no such "thing."

No, nor have the Editors asserted it of him. What they state, and what neither the learned Lecturer nor any of his more learned coadjutors can deny, is, that Dr. Lardner has abundantly proved that Herod died at least seventeen years before Augustus. Here Lardner's testimony ends. But a greater than Lardner, the evangelist Luke (chap. iii.) tells us, what these gentlemen are very unwilling to learn, "that Jesus began to be thirty "years of age in the fifteenth year of the reign of "Tiberius;" and consequently, that he was born



only fifteen years before the death of Augustus, that is, two years at least after Herod's death. This is plain matter of fact; and, as the learned Lecturer very justly observes, it "shakes the whole credit of the narrative" of the miraculous conception. With the vague hypotheses which Lardner as well as others have brought forward to reconcile facts that are evidently contradictory, the Editors of the Improved Version have no concern. They abide by the plain, intelligible, uncontradicted assertion of Luke, and renounce the heathen fable of the miraculous conception.

2. I have ventured to assert, (and the learned Bishop of St. David's has had the goodness to circulate the assertion far more extensively than it was in my power to do,) that "Bishop Horsley himself would have been the first to laugh to scorn the *solemn ignoramus* who should seriously profess to believe that the advantage of the argument remained with him." This, I think, is sufficiently evident to all who read and understand the controversy. It however, is not the good fortune of our learned Lecturer. He grievously complains, (p. 173.) that these ungodly Editors still maintain the genuine orthodoxy of the Ebionites "with as much confidence as if they had not been long since confuted by a learned prelate whom they all

“ dare to depreciate now he is dead, though not even the ablest of them could give him a satisfactory answer when he was alive.” Poor faint-hearted Unitarians!—It is some consolation, however, to know that Bishop Horsley was silenced when living by his indefatigable and justly celebrated opponent; and that since his death, when the controversy was revived, both his pious son, and his learned successor, have thought proper to desist from his defence; and even that paragon of literary journals, the *British Critic* itself, has been constrained reluctantly to acknowledge, that “ Bishop Horsley suffered himself to be led into error by following the conjectural wanderings of Dr. Mosheim,” by which “ he made a false step at the outset, which, with all his ability, he was unable to reclaim.” So little does the Bampton Lecturer understand, and so little qualified is he to give a judgment, in this celebrated controversy.

3. The learned Lecturer proceeds to allege (p. 174.), that “ it is one of the artifices ” of these evil Editors “ to make free with the *article*, substituting a son for *the* son of God, whenever they find it convenient so to do.”

With regard to the definite article, I do not believe that it is ever neglected by the Editors; nor has the writer produced a single fact in proof

of his charge. Whether the translation should be indefinite, when the original is indefinite, is often a mere matter of taste ; and I confess there are passages in the Improved Version in which the indefinite article is used, where I should rather have preferred the definite. This error, if it be such, occurs still more frequently in Mr. Wakefield's Version ;—but who that was not bent upon finding fault, would ever think of alleging it as a serious charge ?

4. To the Improved Version the Editors have prefixed an excellent motto from Archbishop Parker's preface to the Bishop's Bible. "No offence," says the learned prelate, "can justly be taken for this new labour ; nothing prejudicing any other man's judgment by this doing ; nor yet professing this so absolute a translation, as that hereafter might follow no other who might see that which was not yet understood." This surely is innocent enough ; but it does not satisfy our Bampton Lecturer. "Why," says he (p. 171.), "do they prefix to their Version a motto from the words of another archbishop ? The motive is plain. It is to induce the world to suppose that both (Parker and Newcome) were of the same opinion with themselves." To refute an assertion so silly would be equally silly ; but it shows the intemperate spirit of those who

write against the Unitarians, and particularly against the Editors of the Improved Version.

5. The manner in which the learned Lecturer argues from John i. 1. (p. 179.) cannot be considered as very logical. "St. John," says he, "opens his Gospel thus: 'In the beginning was the Word,' &c. The book of Genesis also opens thus: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' Whatever, therefore, is the signification of *the beginning* in one passage is manifestly such in the other also." So because two authors, writing at the distance of almost two thousand years, happen to begin their books with the same word, they must mean the same thing, though one of them is professedly writing the history of the creation, and the other of events of which he was himself contemporary and eye-witness. I hope that such logic will not readily go down with the University of Oxford, even under the authority of the Bampton pulpit\*.

6. This learned Lecturer is very much puzzled that the Editors, after having given Mr. Cappe's translation of the proem of John's Gospel in

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\* The phrases "in the beginning," or "from the beginning," often occur in the writings of the evangelist John, and almost invariably signify in or from the beginning of the gospel; and never from the creation of the world. See John xvi. 4; vi. 64; viii. 25. 1 John ii. 7; iii. 11, 13. 2 John 5.

the text, should have added that of Mr. Lindsey in the notes. "By their insertion," says he (p. 181.), "of this author's version, they involve themselves in this difficulty, either that they must contradict him, or must show that he contradicts them." But as the Editors, after the example of Paul, write not for readers of "prostrate understandings," but for "wise men" who are competent to judge "what they say," they thought it their duty to lay before their readers two interpretations of an obscure passage, leaving them at liberty to select for themselves that which they might think preferable. Herein, to be sure, they lack the advantage of some who write on the banks of the Isis or on those of the Tyber. They cannot say, This is the interpretation of *our church*, and believe it you *must*.

The venerable Lecturer appears equally surprised, that of two Unitarian writers one should receive and the other reject the two first chapters of the Gospel of Luke. And without condescending to enter into any argument,—for that is not his way,—he eagerly seizes the opportunity (p. 182.) of launching out according to custom against the Editors of the Improved Version, whom he charges with "arbitrarily rejecting passages which speak strongly against them;" and with "treating the Scriptures throughout in a way that

" would be deemed notoriously *unfair* and *fraudulent* if applied to any common book; and " with regard to those most precious revelations " of God's will, it is altogether *impious* and *inexcusable*." Having thus exhausted every epithet of abuse, the worthy Lecturer would fain have his readers believe that it is all extorted from him, most unwillingly, by the urgency of the case, which " renders it difficult, if not impossible, for any impartial mind " (like his own gentle spirit) " to acquit them of wilful and deliberate corruption of the Word of Life."

7. The learned Lecturer next attacks the Editors of the Improved Version (p. 183.), " for " marking as spurious, without ceremony, the " whole second chapter of Peter's second epistle." The Editors may indeed have impeached the genuineness of this passage without reason; which, however, the reverend accuser, as usual, has not deigned to discuss. But if he knows any thing of the history of the canon, he must know that the whole of the Second Epistle of Peter was marked as dubious by many of the early christians. Surely, then, it is no very great crime to mark one chapter of it as such. But though arguments are wanting, motives are always ready. For after having stated that the

Editors had marked as spurious the second chapter, he adds, "and no wonder; for it begins with "the mention of false teachers, who should bring "in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord "who bought them." And does Dr. Moysey really believe that the Editors applied this text to their own doctrine, and therefore marked it as spurious? If he does, I pity him; and would only refer him to Whitby's Paraphrase, to convince him that the text is very capable of a Unitarian interpretation even from orthodox divines, when not biassed by party prejudice.

It would be a waste of time to notice the remaining frivolous observations of this learned Lecturer. I shall only advert to a grievous charge which is brought forward (p. 189), the whole weight of which falls unfortunately, but I dare say by good Dr. Moysey quite unintentionally and unknowingly, upon the head of Archbishop Newcome. Upon the text John xx. 28, "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and "my God," the Editors introduce, at the bottom of the page, the following brief note from the Primate's work, inserting at the end of it his name at length:

"These words are usually understood as a confession. Beza says that they are an exclamation: *q. d. My Lord and my God!* how great is

“thy power.”—Whitby’s Last Thoughts, second edition, p. 78.

The meaning of the Primate is clearly this: That the words are usually understood *q. d.* “Thou art my Lord and God.” Beza interprets them as an exclamation, “My Lord and my God!” Whitby, in his Last Thoughts, has explained them thus: “My Lord! and my God! how great is thy power!”

No one who is at all acquainted with Beza’s opinions could ever believe that he meant to give up this great strong hold of orthodoxy; or that the Primate could mean so to represent him. It must however be owned, that, from brevity, the meaning of the note is ambiguous, and leaves room for a cavilling critic, of which the learned Lecturer does not fail to avail himself, vehemently arraigning the Editors of the Improved Version as destitute of “truth and honesty.”

The Lecturer avers (p. 190.), “The whole epistle to the Hebrews they discredit altogether.” And with his usual ingenuity and candour he assigns a motive; “which is indeed less a subject of surprise, since it is so strong and pointed in support of the atonement.” What gentlemen mean by the atonement they are seldom so kind as to explain. If they mean that the death of Christ satisfied the claims of



justice, appeased the wrath of God, and that he bore the punishment due to sin, the epistle to the Hebrews teaches nothing like it. Nor do the Editors of the Improved Version say any thing to "discredit" this epistle, more than what every body knows, and what the reverend Lecturer cannot deny, viz. that "it is distinguished by Eusebius as a disputed work; and "that Origen says that no one can tell who was "the author." How does the learned Lecturer get over this? Why truly; "Origen only says that the "*scribe* is unknown." But this is equally true of the epistles to the Corinthians, and all the rest of the epistles of Paul, excepting that to the Galatians. Origen would not have made so frivolous a remark. It is true that Origen allows that it contains the sentiments of Paul. I think so too, and so, for any thing that appears, might the Editors of the Improved Version;—but that is another question\*.

I am, &c.

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\* In a note towards the close of this *truly evangelical Lecture* (p. 191.), the writer recommends his reader to "consult "the Dean of Cork's very able work on Atonement and Sacrifice, and especially, on this point, the Postscript to the "Appendix." And he particularly quotes with approbation the following sentence from Dr. Magee. "They have been "compelled not only to invent a new translation for the text,

“but a new text for the translation.” In justice to the Dean it ought to be observed, that he has only applied the remark to a single text, which Dr. Moysey applies without scruple, indefinitely, to the whole Version. How far Dr. Magee was warranted in his charge will appear in the Appendix to these Letters. As to Dr. Moysey, ignorance and credulity are his best apology. And he may comfort himself that his case is no worse than that of the good Bishop of St. David’s, who having, like Dr. Moysey, given too easy credit to an unfounded assertion of the Dean of Cork, and having, like the learned Lecturer, added some colouring of his own, circulated the charge with great industry and vehemence, till at length, being convinced of his error, he retracted in a way which will appear in the Appendix, and which I recommend to the Bampton Lecturer’s attentive consideration. I must add, however, that it is not kind in Dr. Magee to bring his admirers into such awkward predicaments, by his loose and random assertions. THEY, at least, have not yet lost their character for veracity.

## LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR,

THE subject of the learned Lecturer's seventh Sermon is "the Eternity of Punishment." And a weaker defence of that unreasonable, unscriptural, and most tremendous doctrine was never made. It is not necessary to enter at large upon the discussion of this subject, as a belief in the ultimate restoration of all mankind, even of the most hardened and impenitent, after having undergone a necessary and salutary, though, perhaps, a painful and tedious remedial process, to virtue and happiness, is by no means peculiar to the Unitarians. It has been demonstrated upon philosophical principles by Dr. Hartley, and defended by many able advocates, ancient and modern. Among others, by the late Bishop Newton, who was in other respects by no means deficient in orthodoxy; and, more lately, by Mr. Simpson of Bath, and by Dr. Estlin of Bristol; and last of all, by my ingenious and pious friend, Dr. Southwood Smith, in his admirable treatise on the Divine Benevolence, who has abundantly proved that this delightful doctrine is established

by the soundest reason upon principles suggested by revelation, and that it is in the highest degree favourable to the practice of virtue.

Our learned Lecturer is desirous to bring us all back to the weak and beggarly elements of an ignorant and barbarous age; and he wishes to fix upon the mild and benevolent religion of Jesus a doctrine the most contrary to its genius and spirit;—a doctrine the most debasing and the most horrible;—a doctrine which, by driving men to despair, drives them either to distraction, or to the extremes of vice and wretchedness;—a doctrine which is inconsistent with every idea of reason and justice; which is most abhorrent from the divine perfections, and which, if it were taught by the christian religion, would of itself be sufficient to overthrow its pretensions to a divine original, and to prove that christianity is a religion not from heaven but from hell. But the reverse is true. The eternity of hell-torments is a doctrine from which christianity revolts; to which it gives not the slightest countenance; and of which there is not the slightest trace either in the Old Testament or the New.

Very different indeed is the system of the learned Lecturer. To do him justice, he seems to be a reluctant advocate of this heart-wither-

ing doctrine. "We have all," he says, (p. 212.) "too much reason to wish that eternity of torment for unrepentant sinners were not a part of God's system." This language, surely, is very strange and unbecoming. Believing, as I do, in the infinite knowledge, power, and goodness of God, I must and do most joyfully believe that every portion of the system which God has formed is the wisest and the best; that nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it; that evil as well as good is overruled for the best purposes; that even wicked agents, with all their malignant purposes, and in all the plenitude of their powers, are but fulfilling, however unknowingly and involuntarily, his wise and good designs; and that when they have accomplished his benevolent purposes, he puts "his hook into their nose, and his bridle into their jaws," and saith, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further." To wish that what God has appointed were no part of his system, is to set up our wisdom and will in opposition to God's:—it is to wish, like the impious Alphonso, that God had consulted us in the choice of his plan:—it is to wish that the system which now, in all its parts and bearings, is the most perfect which infinite wisdom could devise, which infinite goodness could prompt, and which infinite

power could carry into effect, were altered and deteriorated, to gratify our humour and caprice, or at least to fall within the limits of our finite understanding, our narrow views and comprehension.

Yet the learned Lecturer is right. He feels that if human guilt is visited with eternal misery, God is an almighty tyrant; he naturally wishes that he and his fellow-beings lived under a more wise, a more righteous, and a more merciful government; and that he could contemplate the character of the Almighty Sovereign without dismay. "But," says he, "we cannot avert danger by shutting our eyes against it; and it is declared that torment shall be eternal."

Happily, no such declaration is to be found in scripture; and God is not such a tyrant as the learned Lecturer imagines. Yet so strangely is he prepossessed with the idea that Revelation teaches this odious doctrine, that he ventures to argue in favour of its reasonableness; and one of his arguments is, that, because the reward is eternal happiness, it is but equitable that the punishment should be eternal misery. "If the reward," says he, "be eternal (p. 199.), as even Unitarians allow that it shall be, what is the argument, either from reason or analogy, which can set aside the eternity of punishment?" But does

not the learned Lecturer see that his argument proves too much? Will he affirm that human virtue is entitled to infinite reward? Neither, then, does human vice merit infinite punishment. And if the reward of virtue infinitely transcends human merit, so would the eternal punishment of vice infinitely transcend human demerit. Nor let it be supposed that the belief of a just, though limited, punishment will afford encouragement to vice. What is unjust is incredible, and will produce no good effect: what is just is credible, and, as far as it is believed, it will be practically efficacious.

It is astonishing that the learned Lecturer cannot see the absurdity and impiety of his own wretched system. "Man," says he, "is in a state in which it is *impossible* for him not to transgress." And what is the consolation he administers? Why, in the first place, such "im-perfection is not the condition in which God originally created him." Fine consolation truly! I am born under a sentence of eternal misery. But Adam, my remote ancestor, was in a better condition. What is this to me? how does it relieve my suffering, or vindicate divine justice in my condemnation? It is high time to abandon such nonsense as this, and to strike it out of our formularies and our creeds, for in the New Tes-

tament no such absurdity is to be found. "But," adds the learned Lecturer, "in spite of this, he " may yet save himself through the atonement " and mediation made by our blessed Saviour." But if the fact assumed be erroneous, the provision made to counteract the supposed evil is needless; and is as unscriptural as it is unnecessary and unreasonable.

The learned Lecturer, however, is so fully convinced that the doctrine of eternal torments is a doctrine of scripture, that he affirms it in the strongest language. "The passages," says he (p. 196.), "in holy writ which apply to this " matter are so clear, that they appear to be in- " capable of misconstruction,—for they distinctly " teach that the pains of the damned shall be not " only inconceivable but also eternal." The proof however falls, I will not say lamentably, but delightfully, gloriously, infinitely short of the assumption. I will venture to affirm on the other hand, that there is not in the whole voluminous code of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, one single passage, one solitary text, in which the doctrine is taught. I will add, that there is not a single sentence in which the very idea of a human individual existing through eter-



nity in a state of torment is even *expressed* distinctly and unequivocally.

The passage on which the great stress is laid is that which the learned Lecturer has chosen for his text; Matt. xxv. 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." Here it is well known that the word translated "everlasting" often signifies "indefinite" but limited duration. Not to mention that the word translated "punishment" properly signifies correction, chastisement, suffering inflicted for the benefit of the sufferer, and therefore limited. (See Schleusner on the word.) This, therefore, is not a text in which the idea of a human being suffering eternal torment is unequivocally introduced, much less in which that terrible doctrine is plainly taught.

Another very strong text in the estimation of the advocates for the doctrine of eternal torments, is Mark ix. 43. 46, "It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." The word in this and its parallel texts translated "hell" is Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, which, having been the scene of the sacrifice of infants to Moloch, was regarded with horror and detesta-

tion, and was condemned to be the receptacle of all impurities. Hither the carcasses of the dead were carried; some of which were buried and consumed by worms, and some were burned. For which purpose, and for the destruction of other impure objects, fires were kept perpetually burning. To this there is an allusion, Isaiah lxvi. 24. This place was regarded as a type of that in which the wicked shall be hereafter punished. But it gives no countenance to the dreadful supposition that wicked individuals will live in eternal torments, but the contrary. For as a fire that is unquenchable consumes every object that is cast into it, and as a worm which never dies will consume the carcase upon which it feeds, so will the punishments of a future life utterly destroy the object which is exposed to it, whether it be, as some suppose, the sinner himself, or, as I should rather interpret the passage, vicious affections and sinful habits, which are indeed the proper fuel for the tormenting flame, which will never cease to burn till these are wholly exterminated. Nor will the worm die, nor the fire be quenched, till vicious affections and sinful practices are banished from the creation of God.

The Book of Revelation contains some very strong expressions. But, in the first place, the Book of Revelation is one of those whose ge-

nuineness was disputed in the earliest ages ; and therefore, as Dr. Lardner judiciously observes, no doctrine can be proved from this book which may not be distinctly proved from other indisputable passages of sacred writ ; which the doctrine of eternal torments certainly cannot. But neither does the Book of Revelation itself, if attentively considered, contain any proof of the horrific doctrine, that any human individual will endure everlasting torments.

The learned Lecturer cites two texts from this obscure volume. The first is Rev. xiv. 11, "And the smoke of their torment" (*i. e.* of those who worship the beast and his image) "ascendeth up for ever and ever." It may reasonably be doubted who are intended by this obscure symbolical description, and whether the passage at all refers to future sufferings. But should this be allowed, yet surely the smoke of the torment is very different from the torment itself. The smoke may remain long after the miserable victim is consumed. And some memorial may possibly be preserved to perpetuate the remembrance of the awful fact, as a solemn warning to ages yet to come, that vice once existed in the creation of God, and that it was exterminated by condign punishment.

A still stronger expression is found, Rev. xx. 10, "They shall be tormented day and night for ever

“and ever.” But who are they that are to be thus tormented? The devil, the beast, and the false prophet, three symbolical personages, who are said to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. And that it may not be supposed that under these symbols certain individuals are intended, it is expressly stated in the preceding verse, that, as to “the nations who were deceived by them, fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.”

Thus I have shown that the christian scriptures not only do not teach the dreadful doctrine of the eternal misery of the human individual, but they do not even incidentally use any language which unequivocally expresses the idea.

The argument in favour of the ultimate restoration of all mankind, without excepting even the most hardened and profligate, to virtue and happiness, is consequential rather than direct, and stands upon very different ground from that which establishes the limited duration of future sufferings.

The appearances of nature, and many of the representations of future punishment in the New Testament, would lead to the conclusion that the wicked, when they die, cease to exist, and that the virtuous only would, at the appointed season,

be raised to life. But this conclusion is completely negated by the explicit and repeated assertion of Christ and his apostles, that the wicked as well as the righteous shall be restored to life, and that for the express purpose of suffering punishment proportionate to their offences. This doctrine is so distinctly revealed, that it has never been doubted by any who have acknowledged the divine mission of Jesus and his apostles.

But it seems utterly incredible, and quite irreconcilable to the wisdom and to the benevolence of the divine character, that rational beings should be roused out of a state of insensibility for no other purpose whatever but to be tormented for a longer or shorter period of time, and in a greater or a less degree, and then to be for ever banished out of existence. But if the main design of punishment be to reclaim the offender to virtue and happiness, this grand difficulty is removed. We see the triumph of benevolence in restoring the dead transgressor to life; in visiting him with suffering in exact proportion to the greatness of his offences and the inveteracy of his vicious habits; and finally, in his ultimate purification from moral stain, and his restoration to virtue, to happiness, and to God. This is indeed a result infinitely worthy of infinite benevolence; it clears up at once all the difficulties of the divine dis-

pensations ; all the mysteries of the divine government ; and the belief of it fills the pious and contemplative mind with unspeakable satisfaction and delight.

Nor is this delightful doctrine wholly destitute of foundation in the language and the representations of scripture. For—not to mention such general declarations as these, that “ his anger “ abideth but for a moment, but his mercy endureth for ever,”—it is obvious to remark what pains the apostle Paul takes in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the fifteenth of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, to show that the blessings of the gospel extend far beyond the miseries of the fall. It is indeed commonly conceived, that in the Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle is only insisting upon the resurrection of the virtuous ; but the contrary is most apparent :—he is evidently speaking of the resurrection of all mankind ;—“ for as in Adam ALL die, so in Christ “ shall ALL be made alive,” restored to life, activity, and happiness. But not all at the same time : No. Ver. 23, “ Every one in his own order : “ First, Christ ; then, they who are Christ’s at his “ coming. After this cometh the end,” the third period, “ when he shall have put down all rule, “ and all authority and power ; for Christ must “ reign till God has put all his enemies,” that is,

all vice and misery, "under his feet; and death  
"itself, the last enemy, shall be destroyed," and  
swallowed up for ever. All his victims shall be  
rescued from his grasp, and shall be restored to  
virtue, happiness, and immortality.

A doctrine this how unlike the popish doctrine  
of purgatory, from the pains of which men are  
to be delivered by the prayers of the priest, which  
are to be purchased with money! If any are so  
grossly ignorant as to be incapable of distinguish-  
ing between the two, they are much to be pitied.  
If any, knowing the difference, purposely con-  
found them, in order to mislead the simple and  
unreflecting reader, they are still more to be  
pitied. To attempt to rectify an error so gross,  
whether voluntary or involuntary, would be an  
insult upon the understanding of the reader.

I am, &c.

## LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

THE learned Lecturer's "concluding" Discourse is little more than a whining declamation against the Unitarians, repeating the charges which he has before alleged, over and over, of arrogance, vanity, self-conceit, fraud, blasphemy, &c. &c. because their understandings are not sufficiently *prostrate*, nor their docility sufficiently *humble*, to admit confident assertions as satisfactory proofs, and to receive as the fundamental truths of the christian religion, doctrines which, after the closest attention which they can give, appear to them to be inconsistent with its declarations, and subversive of its spirit. The learned Lecturer, however, is perfectly satisfied with the success of his own exertions, and boasts not a little of his own prowess in the conflict. "Since the proofs," says he (p. 232.), "upon which I have insisted have been chiefly drawn from passages of holy writ, whose authenticity is not denied even by our adversaries, a demonstration of the falsehood of their tenets is thereby afforded, which must carry conviction to every



“unbiassed mind, whether of the learned or the unlearned.”...“I have proved the truth of those doctrines which we hold and they refuse, by the word of him whose word is truth.” And truly Unitarianism must be easily put down, if it has been put to silence by such arguments as the learned Lecturer has advanced. And the understandings of those who can be satisfied with them must be in a very hopeful state of discipline.

Yet still the learned Lecturer insists, that the faith which he defends is that of the primitive church. “We enter upon this controversy,” says he (p. 234.), “not as one which we have provoked by any novel opinions of ours, but in defence of that which has been the christian faith from the first.” But, aware that this point will not be readily conceded, he adds in the next page, that the Unitarians claim the primitive Church as giving its testimony in their favour; “though,” says he, “their assertion has long ago been most triumphantly refuted by the learning and abilities of a distinguished prelate of our own days.” The worthy Lecturer, no doubt, says what he believes, knowing little or nothing of the controversy between Dr. Priestley and Bishop Horsley: but those who do understand the question could have informed him, that the very learned prelate to whom he alludes, thought himself too happy

in escaping from the ruins of his orthodox Hebrew church at Ælia, into a Welch bishopric : and that his right reverend successor has burnt his fingers terribly in attempting to rebuild the ruinous pile. Since that abortive attempt, the walls of Ælia like those of Jericho have lain in ruins : and he must be an abler man than the Bampton Lecturer, who, undertaking to rebuild them, shall succeed in an achievement in which these learned prelates have so completely and deplorably failed.

It is amusing to observe, that after the reverend Lecturer has exhausted his whole vocabulary of abuse, and has rung changes without end on the words blasphemy, fraud, infidelity, arrogance, vanity, ignorance, barefacedness, coarseness, profaneness, &c. &c. &c., he thinks fit at last to recommend great christian moderation in the conduct of controversy, though it must be confessed he does it awkwardly and with an ill grace, as if it was not quite natural to him. Perhaps he only means to recommend such conduct to his own opponents, if any one should think it worth while to enter the lists against him. And I trust, that the learned Lecturer will see that I have profited both by his precept and example ; for I should be truly sorry to be detected in carrying on controversy with a similar spirit. But let him speak for himself.

“ All christians,” says he (p. 235), “ but particularly those dedicated to the sacred office, are called upon to come forward, to take to them the whole armour of God, and fight the good fight of faith ; but never let us forget that which, in the heat of controversy, is too often allowed to escape our recollection, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal\*. If it be almost impossible to suppress indignation at the coarse and profane manner in which things the most sacred are occasionally treated by the adversary, yet should a strict guard be kept over the mind of him who engages in the question, lest his indignation degenerate into anger and personal animosity.”

Very wholesome advice indeed ! Had the learned Lecturer begun, instead of finishing, his volume with it, and acted accordingly, his work would have worn a very different aspect, and would have run in a much smoother style, not to say how greatly his labours would have been abridged.

In how different a spirit controversy is sometimes conducted may be illustrated by an example

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\* The learned Lecturer, no doubt, means, since *impunity* has been secured to the professors of scriptural christianity by Mr. W. Smith's bill. No thanks to him and to some of his over-zealous brethren, that the carnal weapon has been wrested out of their hand.

taken from the learned Lecturer himself. "They tell (says he, p. 225.) those who listen to them, in a summary manner, that there is nothing in the arguments which are urged against them; and even the word of God itself is treated by them with as little ceremony. For instance; one of their principal *upholders*, when pressed with one of those positive texts of St. John's gospel, which is fatal to their blasphemous assertion of the mere humanity of Christ, whom the Unitarians declare to have been born in the natural way, of his mother Mary, a man in all respects like other men, thinks it sufficient coolly to reply, 'that there is nothing in it.' The apostle's words are these: 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' It is not easy to conceive words more directly affirmative of the *præexistence* of our Saviour before his assumption of our human nature. Yet to this it is *only* answered, that 'no argument can be drawn from this ambiguous text.' If this be ambiguous, it is not easy to conceive what can be express or positive."

I am really concerned to deprive the author of the credit, and the reader of the benefit, of this

powerful argument, and particularly of the very favourable opportunity which it affords, and of which the author has so happily availed himself, to expose the arrogant pretensions and blasphemous assertions of the Unitarians, or at least of *one of their principal upholders*; and the more so, as a plain statement of facts implicates in some degree the reverend accuser's character. But, alas, the truth must be told, *coute qu'il coute*. And the real truth is, that in this heavy accusation, so *coolly* and so confidently brought forward by the learned Lecturer, there is not one word of truth, no, not one single particle.

The fact is, that I am myself the unfortunate *upholder* against whom the accusation is brought. And in page 148 of the first edition of the *Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ*, to which the reader is referred, these words are to be found: "No argument for the pre-existence of Christ can be drawn from this ambiguous text." From what text? from John xvii. 5? No: nor from any text near it. But as plainly as printing can represent, the text referred to is Colossians i. 17: "He is *before* all things." Now, as the word ( $\pi\rho\omicron$ ) translated *before* is expressive of precedence, whether in time, place, or dignity, (see Schleus-

ner,) surely it is very fair to conclude, that no argument for the pre-existence of Christ can be drawn from this ambiguous text.

I should like to know what reflections Dr. Moysey, or Dean Magee, or any other *upholder* of the infallibility of King James's translation, would say if such a blunder as this had been detected in the Improved Version. Bless me! what a clamour would have been instantly raised against the impious Editors for this gross, fraudulent, and blasphemous perversion of the Word of God! Nothing, it would be said, is too arrogant, or too presumptuous, or too barefaced, or too profane, for these infidel Unitarians, these God-denying heretics. And if the Editors should apologize for it as a mistake, with what a sarcastic sneer would it be replied, that it was not a little extraordinary that such a mistake should happen in a text of such peculiar importance!

Such is the language which would undoubtedly have been held had such an error occurred in the Improved Version. An error, so palpable, I will venture to say, does not occur in the whole volume. In fact, it is a grosser blunder than is to be found in all the six texts taken together, which Dean Magee has selected, and out of which he has spun a ponderous volume of such gross and vulgar abuse of the Editors of the

Improved Version, as can disgrace no one but himself\*.

What then shall we say? that Dr. Moysey has wilfully perverted the *Calm Inquiry* in order to gain an opportunity of abusing its author? By no means. Little as I am satisfied with Dr. Moysey's mode of conducting controversy, I have too high an opinion of his personal character not to believe that he would scorn the thought of asserting or circulating a wilful falsehood. And I have too good an opinion of his understanding, not to believe that he would see the folly of such a conduct, even if he were not restrained from it by better principles. The fact is, that he has committed a great error, I doubt not, an involuntary one, which he will see it his duty to retract. How such an error could have occurred it is not easy to guess. Perhaps the learned Lecturer was himself imposed upon by some unlucky wag in whom he placed confidence, and who thought this a good opportunity of aiming a mortal blow at the God-denying heretics, or at least of inflicting a fatal wound upon him who has the honour of being designated as one of their "principal upholders," and as one of those "who are determined by the most barefaced, though unground-

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\* See the Appendix to these Letters.

“ ed assertions, to prejudice the minds of those  
 “ who will listen to them ; resisting themselves,  
 “ and stifling in others, the conviction which it is  
 “ difficult to imagine they do not see, and which  
 “ indeed *they do see*.” p. 227. I should be ashamed,  
 and should regard it as a disgrace, to retort such  
 charges as these.—Let the learned Lecturer rumi-  
 nate calmly upon his own unadvised and intem-  
 perate language.

He earnestly deprecates (p. 237.) all contro-  
 versy except on “ points which affect the basis of  
 “ religion, which threaten the foundations of the  
 “ christian faith.” And he exhorts (p. 238.) “ all  
 “ believers” to unite “ against those who are the  
 “ enemies of the faith,” of whom “ the present  
 “ sect of Unitarians are the chief. Unitarianism  
 “ is as it were the sink into which those who have  
 “ long been unsettled in their opinions, and have  
 “ run through many different persuasions, have  
 “ fallen at last. This is well known to be the  
 “ case with a large and powerful sect which once  
 “ differed principally on a point of discipline  
 “ with the Established Church of this land, many  
 “ of whose members however are now falling into  
 “ this state of positive unbelief.” And having be-  
 fore exhausted almost every epithet of abuse,  
 he at last denounces Unitarianism as “ a comfort-



"less doctrine." p. 241. An epithet peculiarly appropriate from one whose system includes the doctrine of eternal torment. These passages show how, from beginning to end, the same kind of insulting language is held by the reverend Lecturer; and such is the kind of weapon upon which the adversaries of the Unitarian doctrine most rely for bearing down the immortal irresistible principle of sacred truth.

After all, I am still at a loss to explain why it is that the established clergy are so forward to volunteer their attacks upon the Unitarians. Not a sermon is preached upon any public occasion, not a charge is delivered, but a thrust is made at the Unitarians. From the highest dignitary to the lowest aspirant, all are loud in their invectives against the Unitarians. It has even been said that attempts have been made to poison the ear, and to excite the prejudices of the august representative of royalty, who cannot indeed be expected to enter deeply into theological speculation, and who will probably be content to believe as the church believes; but who, I trust, will never depart from those principles of toleration which have hitherto distinguished his illustrious House, which so fondly endeared the Hanover Family and the Hanover Succession

to the oppressed non-conformists of a former age; and the reverse of which first devoted to public execration, and afterwards banished from the throne, the detested family of Stuart. As to the reported conduct of the most reverend assailant upon the occasion to which I allude, if the rumour is correct, to say the least, it was not very manly to attack where a defence was impossible.

But what is it that the Unitarians have done, that they should be the object of such general obloquy to the established clergy? It is allowed by our reverend opponent that we have not attacked the ecclesiastical establishment, the revenues of the church, or the character of the clergy. I will add, that we have entered into no conspiracy against church or state. All that Unitarians do to promote their cause is done openly, without any reserve or affectation of concealment. Their books are published, their lectures are advertised; the proceedings of their societies are made known; hardly half a dozen can meet together for friendly conversation, but the secretary sends up the account, signed with his initials, for the next Repository; and hardly any pious and charitable female is gathered to her fathers, but her works and virtues are immediately chronicled for the benefit of posterity. Our adversaries may smile at the consequence we assume; but,

at any rate, a community, which affects so much publicity, can never be suspected of treasonable designs; and whatever passes among ourselves, nothing hostile or unfriendly to our fellow-christians, however different in opinion, ever escapes upon such occasions. Why, then, is a society, so peaceful in its principles and its conduct, so open and ingenuous in all its proceedings, to be singled out and branded as the enemies of their government, their country, and mankind?

“But,” says the learned Lecturer (p. 247.), “the principles of this sect are such, that they stand in direct opposition to every thing which we most honour and revere.”—“Has it not grown into a fashion among the Unitarians to put themselves forward in reviling those sacred truths, to the defence of which the clergy have solemnly dedicated themselves?” But in what way have they done this? If the Unitarians have conceived it to be their duty to enter their grave and solemn protest against many of the popular and fashionable doctrines of the day, as gross and intolerable corruptions of the purity of the christian faith, have they presumed to attack the characters of those who conscientiously hold these opinions? Have they reviled those who maintain the doctrine of original sin, of atonement, of imputed righteousness, of the deity of Jesus

Christ, of the eternity of hell torments, as vain and arrogant, as hypocrites and blasphemers, as wilfully perverting the Scriptures, and giving them a sense which is foreign to their true meaning, in order to support opinions which they know to be unscriptural, and to captivate and please weak and silly people ;—and in short, that whatever they might pretend to the contrary, they are neither more nor less than infidels in disguise, who mean to bring the christian religion into hatred and contempt, and who ought to be detected and exposed as such ? What would Dr. Moysey have said if any Unitarian writer had used such language, and had alleged such charges against himself, and against other members of his beloved church ? Language would hardly be able to supply words sufficiently energetic to express the indignation and contempt of the learned writer and his friends upon such an occasion ; nor, in truth, could any asperity of animadversion be too severe.

But is not this the very way in which the learned Lecturer has treated the Unitarians ? are not these the very charges he has alleged ? is not this the very language he has used ? And is that mode of discussing a serious question, decent and allowable in a clergyman of the church of England, who ought at least to be a man of veracity, a scholar, and a gentleman, which would be gross,

vulgar, and nauseous, in one of any other profession? Do the clergy really claim this privilege? have they obtained a patent for the exclusive right to the use of rude, abusive, ungentleman-like language in theological controversy?

But is the learned Lecturer sincere in his imputations? Can he really believe, that the Unitarians are to be classed as infidels? Is a man, who believes that Jesus is a teacher sent from God, that he taught the words of eternal life, that he wrought miracles, that he was raised from the dead, that he ascended into heaven, and that in due time he will return to raise the dead and to judge the world, and who governs his conduct by the faith and hope of the gospel, is this man no christian? is he to be regarded as a blasphemer and an infidel? as one who brands Jesus as an impostor, and his gospel as a fable? Was Lardner an infidel? Lardner, whom all parties agree to praise? and who has done more to establish the truth and to exemplify the spirit of christianity, than almost any writer since the age of the apostles? Yet Lardner was an Unitarian in the strictest sense of the word; he believed no trinity, no atonement, no original sin. And if Lardner, and they who think with Lardner, are to be excluded from the pale of christian communion, who is entitled to admission? In a dark and barbarous age,

when ignorance and bigotry were universal, and a degraded laity were the abject slaves of a miserable and unlettered priesthood, nothing was too absurd for an arrogant priest to teach, or an ignorant and priest-ridden layman to believe. But that hour is passed. And it is rather too much for a man of sense and learning, who knows anything of the world, in the present liberal and inquisitive age, to affect to thunder out anathemas upon those who hold different opinions from his own, and to consign to everlasting torments men whose characters are unimpeachable, merely because they cannot subscribe to his metaphysical creed; because they prefer the doctrine of Dr. Wallis to that of Bishop Gastrell,—the doctrine which was formerly approved by the University of Oxford, to that which has lately been sanctioned by the University press. No, no, Dr. Moysey: such anathemas will not go down among sensible and well-informed men in the present day. The spirit of this enlightened and tolerant age is, that every one should go to heaven in their own way, provided they do not injure one another.

Let every man therefore, according to the apostolic rule, “freely enjoy his own opinion\*.” Let Unitarians believe with Dr. Wallis, that the Father,

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\* Rom. xiv. 5: Ἐκαστος ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ νοῖ πληροφορεῖσθω, “Leave  
“every man freely to form, settle, and follow his own judg-

the Son, and the Holy Spirit are no more three distinct intelligent persons, than the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob are three Gods: and let Dr. Sherlock and his partisans believe, if they like, that the three persons of the Trinity are as much three, distinct, infinite minds, as Peter, James, and John are three men\*. —Let the Athanasian believe that the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty, and yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty: while Dr. Burnet and his followers maintain that the Son and the Holy Ghost are created beings, and are Gods only by the indwelling of the Father's Godhead†.—Let Bishop Horsley and his admirers contend that the Father produced the Son by contemplating his own perfections, and refuse to assign a reason why he produced no more than one‡.—Let Bishop Gastrell and Dr. Moysey believe, if they can,

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"ment." Dr. Taylor. The allusion is to a ship in full sail, moving without any impediment. See Doddridge in loc. and Bennet's *Irenicum*, App. p. 120.

\* Vide supra p. 29;

† Burnet's (Dr. Thomas) *Script. Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 173, 174.

‡ "A principle common to all the Platonic fathers, and *seems to be founded in Scripture*, that the existence of the Son flows necessarily from the Divine Intellect exerted on itself; *from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections.* But

that the Father "includes the whole idea of God, and something more;" that the Son "includes the whole idea of God, and something more;" and that the Holy Ghost "includes the whole idea of God, and something more;" while, all together, they make up One complete God, and nothing more\*. And let Bishop Burgess, on the contrary, believe, if it be possible, that the Father is a person, but "not a being;" the Son is a person, but "not a being;" and the Holy Ghost is a person, but "not a being;" and that these three personal non-entities make

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"as the Father ever was, his perfections have ever been, and his intellect has ever been, active. But perfections which have ever been, the ever-active intellect must ever have contemplated; and the contemplation which hath ever been, must ever have been accompanied with its just effect, the personal existence of the Son."—Horsley's Charge, in Tracts, &c. p. 61.

This curious morceau of superlative nonsense, which unwittingly escaped the learned polemic, his acute and active adversary seized eagerly, and rallied him upon it without mercy. But in the fourth Disquisition annexed to his Collection of Tracts in reply to Dr. Priestley, the wary prelate, who had learned wisdom by experience, though he very prudently declines to defend the doctrine, very successfully shows, in opposition to Dr. Priestley, who charged him with being the original inventor of the absurdity, that other learned men, especially about the time of the Reformation, had broached the same nonsense before him.

\* Vid. supra, p. 32.



One perfect Being\*.—Let Mr. Heber maintain, if he pleases, the extraordinary position, that the Father is the first person in the Trinity, the archangel Michael the second, and the angel Gabriel the third†.—Let Dean Magee teach us, that Cain was the first Unitarian, that the sin of Cain consisted in offering a vegetable instead of an animal sacrifice to his Maker, and that without respect to the atonement of Christ; and let him be rewarded with a bishoprick for his pains‡.—Let

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\* “The Scripture declares that there is only one God.—  
 “The same scriptures declare that there are three omnipresent PERSONS, but there cannot be two omnipresent BEINGS, therefore the three omnipresent persons can be only one God.” Bishop Burgess’s Brief Memorial on the Repeal of the Statutes 9 & 10 of William III. p. 21.

† Heber’s Bampton Lectures, No. IV. The learned writer assures us that “the Mahometan doctors all understand the angel Gabriel to mean the Holy Ghost.” p. 295. Their authority, no doubt, is great. What would have been said if an Unitarian writer had appealed to them?

‡ “The sacrifice of Abel was an animal sacrifice. This sacrifice was accepted. The ground of this acceptance was the faith in which it was offered. Scripture assigns no other object of this faith but the promise of a Redeemer. And of this faith the offering of an animal in sacrifice appears to have been the legitimate, and consequently the instituted, expression. The institution of animal sacrifice then was coeval with the fall, and had a reference then to the sacrifice of our redemption.” Magee on Atonement, vol. i. p. 54.

“Cain—disdaining to adopt the prescribed mode of mani-

Dr. Hales, the learned rector of Killesandra, who declares himself to be "a priest after the Order of "Melchisedec \*," the *third*, I presume, in the succession ; let this learned Hierophant demonstrate

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"festing his belief, possibly as not appearing to *his reason* to "possess any efficacy or natural fitness, thought he had sufficiently acquitted himself of his duty in acknowledging the "general superintendence of God, and expressing his gratitude to the Supreme Benefactor, by presenting some of "those good things, which he thereby confessed to have been "derived from his bounty." Surely there was no great harm in this. But the pious Dean proceeds to express his holy indignation : "In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits "the first fruits of his parents' disobedience, in the arrogance "and self-sufficiency of reason, rejecting the aids of Revelation, because they fell not within its apprehension of right. "He takes the first place in the annals of deism (*q. unitarianism*) ; and displays, in his proud rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice, the same spirit which, in later days, has "actuated his *enlightened* followers in rejecting the sacrifice "of Christ."—Ibid. p. 52, 53.

Fine words truly ! One would wonder how the very reverend writer obtained all his information. But as further inquiries might be deemed officious and troublesome, it may be best to receive this addition to the Mosaic history with *humble docility*, and a dutiful "prostration of the understanding," which always saves a great deal of trouble to both parties.

\* In the "Inspector," published in London, 1799, and attributed to Dr. Hales, is the following curious passage, p. 37 : "I now entreat, I now beseech, I now supplicate the attention of all that have *ears to hear*, while I enter my formal "written protest, in the most solemn and impressive terms

by his *critically accurate* skill in Greek, that the spirits of the deep have all been *muzzled* since our Lord stilled the tempest; and, what is of far greater consequence, that Satan himself is become a *Methodist* at last\*.—Finally, let the learned and

“seriousness itself can dictate, as a servant of the most high God, as a PRIEST AFTER THE PATRIARCHAL AND EVANGELICAL ORDERS OF MELCHISEDEC and Jesus Christ, as a benevolent citizen of the world, and as a faithful, a loyal, and a willing subject of the British empire,” &c. &c.

\* “A storm being suddenly raised while our Lord was asleep,” by Satan, in revenge for what was said of him in the parable of the Sower, “our Lord, roused from sleep in indignation at such a treacherous attempt to compass his destruction unawares,” exclaims, Mark iv. 39, *Σιωπα, πεφίμωσο*, “Hush, wind: Be instantly muzzled, sea: and the wind was lulled, and there fell a great calm.” The author conjectures, “with all due diffidence and humility, that these words were addressed not to the inanimate elements themselves,” which, to be sure, did not want a muzzle, “but to the impure spirits of the wind and the waves,” who might, no doubt, by this happy contrivance, be kept from doing mischief, like so many dancing bears. See Inspector, p. 81—84.

The ingenious writer “is strongly of opinion (p. 85), that the critically accurate Mark has given the *original words* uttered by Jesus” upon this occasion. It appears, therefore, that our Lord addressed the impure spirits upon this occasion in Greek: perhaps they might not understand Hebrew.

After all, though Satan was very near playing our Lord an unlucky trick upon this occasion, there is great reason to believe

accomplished Bishop of London, if he thinks it for the credit of his order, continue to represent the doctrine of his church as requiring "a "humble docility" and "prostration of the understanding," to which the haughty spirit of Unitarianism scorns to submit\*.—Let, I say, all these gentlemen, and their numerous adherents, enjoy their respective opinions with the most unrestrained freedom; let them profess their principles as publicly as they please; and let them propagate these doctrines with zeal proportioned

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that he has long ago deeply repented of it, since it appears among other notable discoveries of this great *high priest* and *loyal subject*, that Satan has long since become a Methodist; though the learned writer mentions it with apparent regret, as if he thought that he had better have retained his old shape. See Eph. vi. 11. which he translates (p. 56.) "put on the divine panoply, to enable you to withstand the METHODISM of the devil." In a note he informs his readers, that this important and difficult phrase is equivalent to Eph. iv. 14. which he renders the METHODISM of the imposture.—In p. 79, this arch-priest observes that our Lord, with infinite address, "refuted, "by clearer and plainer texts of scripture, the *methodisms* of "the tempter," and "banished him from his presence, foiled "and overcome at *his own weapons*." Thus it appears that our Lord out-did the old Methodist in his own way.

\* The Bishop of London (Dr. Howley), in the Charge delivered to his Clergy at his first Visitation (p. 17.), speaks of Unitarians as "men who, loving rather to question than "learn, have approached the oracles of divine truth without "that humble docility, that prostration of the understanding

to their apprehended importance ; but let them, at the same time, beware not to exceed their just limits ; let them not invade the rights of their neighbour ; let them not set themselves up as the lords of other men's consciences ; let them not presume to erect the little Shibboleth of their own party as the test of evangelical truth ; let them not usurp the authority of Christ, and reject those who acknowledge him as their Master and Head, and who yield a ready and unfeigned assent to whatever doctrine it is proved that he has taught, but who assume to themselves that liberty of judgment which they concede to others, and who cannot see the evidence of many opinions, which pass currently for the peculiarities of the gospel, and upon which many are disposed to lay the greatest stress. At any rate, if it must

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“ and will, which are indispensable to proficiency in christian instruction.”

What his Lordship means by the *Oracles of Divine Truth* may be inferred from the following passage (p. 23.) addressed to the Clergy of his Diocese : “ YOUR INSTRUCTIONS AND EXHORTATIONS, RECEIVED WITH HUMBLE DOCILITY as the ORACLES OF GOD, by congregations who revere in your persons the dispensers of divine truth, will no longer be wasted upon a barren soil.” His Lordship seems to have forgotten for the moment, that he was the prelate of a Protestant, and not of a Popish Church : and that he was writing in the nineteenth and not in the twelfth century.

be the unfortunate lot of Unitarians to be condemned by their intemperate and misjudging brethren, from their decision they calmly appeal to a superior tribunal, where they will be sure to meet with the justice which is denied them here, where humble, diligent, and serious inquiry will unquestionably be crowned with approbation; and where error, unavoidable in imperfect humanity, will never be imputed as crime. In the mean time they will not return railing for railing: but while they endeavour, with meekness and gentleness, to correct the errors and to enlighten the minds of their mistaken brethren, they will never denounce them as excluded from the favour of God by involuntary error, however great, having learned from the highest authority, to conceive of God as an indulgent Father, who will not visit his children who desire to please him, with severe chastisement, merely because they are mistaken, in the means.

Far be it from me to deny that many sensible and serious persons are very sincere believers in the deity of Christ, in the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Atonement, of Original Sin, and in all the long catalogue of articles of faith which are usually associated with them, and which appear to me to be gross heathenish corruptions of the simplicity of the christian faith. It is also to be

expected that, while their minds are entangled in these unhappy errors, they will, as indeed they ought to do, lay considerable stress upon them ; for they are doctrines of great practical importance. Nor do I at all condemn the zeal which opposes what they must necessarily regard as the great errors of the Unitarian creed. But let this be done with a christian spirit. Let the evidence of every doctrine be fairly proposed ; let its importance be stated, and let objections be answered. But let not the professed advocates of truth launch out into bitter invective. This will never convert an opponent. It can have no use but to excite bad passions. And an impartial judge will strongly suspect that calumny and invective are only resorted to when argument fails.

But why are Unitarians reproached as, beyond all others, hostile to the Established Church? The great majority even of the orthodox dissenters are opposed to civil establishments of religion as such. They profess to regard it as unlawful for the magistrate to interfere with the concerns of religion. They consider religion as completely out of his province ; that it does not need his protection ; that his interposition is universally, at all times, and in every shape injurious ; and that religion would be more general, more pure, and more ef-

ficacious, if it were left entirely independent of the magistrate, than it can possibly be by any aid which it may derive from him. Such persons are in principle hostile to religious establishments; and of the progress of such opinions the members of an establishment may naturally be jealous.

That many of the Unitarians profess similar principles cannot be denied. But this is by no means the common principle of the party. I know many strict Unitarians, sincere believers in the proper unity of God, and that God alone, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all mankind, is the proper object of religious worship; also that Jesus Christ is a mere human being, in all respects like to his brethren, distinguished from them only as the chief of all the prophets of God, and as being appointed by the Father to raise the dead, and to judge the world, who, while they openly and zealously profess these important truths, are at the same time decided friends to civil establishments of religion; who regard such establishments as the best means, under Divine Providence, of supporting christianity in the world; who think that without them the religion of Jesus itself would, almost if not altogether, have perished in the dark ages; who, without contending for its divine institution, approve of diocesan episcopacy, and the form of



government and discipline as established in the church of England, as expedient and wise; and who highly esteem the public Liturgy and the Common Prayer; who with very great reluctance dissent from the Established Church, and worship in separate chapels, solely because they cannot conscientiously join in a form of worship which appears to them to be unreasonable and unscriptural, and which would in them be impious and idolatrous. Upon these solid and substantial grounds, and upon these grounds only, they willingly incur the odium and obloquy which attaches to a separation from the Established Church and the religion of their forefathers; and most gladly would they return to the bosom of the national church, if the legislature would so far comply with the wishes of many of the best and most enlightened friends of the Establishment, as to grant the reasonable and modest prayer of the petitioning clergy some years ago, viz. to substitute subscription to the scriptures instead of subscription to the Articles, and to reform the Common Prayer Book upon the plan of Dr. Clarke's. And surely, if an impartial bystander may be permitted to give an opinion, this would be a mode of proceeding infinitely more worthy of an enlightened and improving age, and far more favourable to the sta-

bility and prosperity of the Established Church, than rigorously to insist upon every article of faith and worship which was introduced in the infancy of the Reformation, and in an age just emerging from barbarism; the effect of which is, either to keep out of the church men of the best principles, and the most liberal and enlightened minds, or to make them miserable while they remain in it; and to deprive the church of the support of its best and ablest advocates. If this simple, judicious, and practicable reform were once introduced, it would fix the Church of England upon a rock from whence it might bid a proud defiance to all its enemies, and against which the gates of hell would never be able to prevail.

I am, &c.

T. BELSHAM.

Essex House,  
January 22, 1819.



## APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

*Animadversions on Dean Magee's Supplementary Volume, in a Letter to a Friend\*,*

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DEAR SIR,

THE Very Reverend Dean of Cork, Dr. Magee, in the third volume of his theological *Olio* lately published, in the style and temper of which he seems to have excelled all his former excellings, has selected as the text of his discursive performance six passages from the Improved Version, all of them, as he expresses it, "vitally affecting some

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\* This Letter was first published in *The Monthly Repository* for the year 1817, and addressed to its worthy Editor.

It is proper to remark, that in my copy of this volume, printed for Cadell and Davies, 1816, the pages of the Supplement are marked as a continuation of Vol. II. and begin with p. 465. I perceive by Dr. Moysey's references that it has also been published as a separate volume, and paged as usual. This

“ of the great doctrines of Christianity ;” as “ specimens of important *unacknowledged* departures “ from Newcome’s Version, not to be accounted “ for from mere accident ;” and in direct contravention of their express engagement with the public to make open acknowledgment of every departure from the Primate’s text. And they are further accused (with a peculiarly good grace from the learned and *lengthy* Dean) of “ employing “ *lengthened observations in the notes*, for the very “ purpose of divesting *these texts* of all appearance “ of the meaning which would necessarily result “ from the Primate’s rendering, deliberately and “ *unacknowledgedly* rejected and altered by them.” The texts and variations are produced ‘at length, pp. 480, 481, and the charge is alleged without any modification or qualification whatsoever.

I have thought it expedient to notice these charges, because some candid and sensible per-

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of course produces some confusion. And yet *by good fortune* so exactly does the *new* edition correspond with the *old*, that if the reader will but take the trouble to subtract the number 465, which is the first page in my copy, from the number of the page cited in the Letter, he will generally find the corresponding page in the new edition : *e.g.* the first quotation in the Letter is p. 480 : but 480—465 is equal to 15, which is the page in the *new* edition.

sons, who duly appreciate the Dean's general arguments, have nevertheless expressed their surprise at, what has appeared to them, the gross inattention of the Editors of the Improved Version, in passing over without notice the important discrepancies which the very reverend accuser has produced. Alas! their honourable minds could have no suspicion of the artifices which a professed polemic will condescend to use. They will read and wonder,

I. The first of those texts which the very reverend writer has selected as an "*important*" instance in which the Editors aforesaid have "*de-liberately*," and, as he elegantly expresses it, "*unacknowledgedly* rejected and altered the Pri-mate's rendering," is,

" Luke i. 35, thus translated by Dr. Newcome; "Therefore that holy child also who shall be born of thee, shall be called *The* Son of God." The Editors substitute "A Son of God," and they have omitted to acknowledge the variation.

Upon this most important distinction between A Son and ~~THE~~ Son, the very reverend and very learned writer has descanted through thirty-five pages of *lengthened observations*, in the notes, to show that neglecting to acknowledge a variation of such magnitude, "could not be accounted for

"by mere accident," but must have been the result of some sinister design on the part of the Editors.

It is in vain to urge to the very reverend accuser, in extenuation of the offence, that the Primate's monosyllable *THE*, being printed in Italics, was an indication that it was not found in the original, and, therefore, that the deviation was the more excusable: for it will appear in the course of these observations, that Unitarian readers being commonly "men of sound understandings and honest hearts," against whom the very reverend Dean entertains the same laudable antipathy as his great prototype the Bishop of St. David's, know nothing of the distinction between Roman and Italic characters, or of the use of that distinction. See p. 672 of the Dean's volume.

To the charge, therefore, as it stands in the indictment, the Editors of the Improved Version must plead guilty. They have verily and indeed substituted their own roman A for the Primate's italic *The*. And this they have done, as the Dean says, quite *unacknowledgedly*, and as I think very unnecessarily: for it is very probable that the authors of the fable of the miraculous conception meant in this passage to affirm that Jesus derived the title of the Son of God from his miraculous birth; thus hoping to efface in some measure the

scandal of the cross, by elevating, as they foolishly dreamed, the founder of their faith to a level with the hero gods of the heathen mythology. This was a great step for so early an age: but the sublime mystery of the sonship of Christ, as the second person in the Trinity, had not then been discovered. The Editors, therefore, of the Improved Version, who have been guilty of this needless alteration, I leave to the tender mercies of the Dean of Cork: and I request the pious reader seriously to consider the solemn question of the venerable dignitary, whether such “a specimen of important *unacknowledged* departure “from Newcome’s Version is to be accounted for “from mere accident,” and to give his judgment accordingly.

II. The second text in which the Editors of the Improved Version are accused of “*unacknowledgedly* departing from the Primate’s rendering,” is John i. 12, thus adopted by the Archbishop from the Public Version: “But as many “as received him to them gave he POWER to become children of God.” The Improved Version for “power” substitutes AUTHORITY.

And here the Editors of the Improved Version must again plead guilty. They have rejected, they



have altered, and they have not acknowledged. A common reader, with a grain of charity, "a sound understanding, and an honest heart," who sees but little difference between being *empowered* to become children of God, and being *authorized* to call themselves by that honourable name, would candidly say of the omission, "peradventure it was an oversight." Not so the perspicacious Dean of Cork: wherever he spies an Unitarian he sees an enemy to the constitution in church and state. He is sure that it is impossible for an Unitarian to make use even of the commonest phraseology, without some deep and concealed meaning of blasphemy, sedition, jacobinism, or perhaps even worse. And in the present case, he has eked out four-and-twenty pages of "lengthened observations" and learned "notes," to prove that the Editors of the Improved Version mean something very bad, though he cannot precisely tell what, by this *important* and *unacknowledged* substitution of **AUTHORITY** for **POWER**.

III. The third count in the indictment of the very reverend accuser, is John iii. 13, the first clause of which is thus translated by Archbishop Newcome: "Now no man GOETH up to heaven" but he who came down from heaven." The

Editors of the Improved Version have, in preference, substituted the words of the Public Version, "No man hath ASCENDED up to heaven."

One would not have suspected that there could be any great harm in this; but, unfortunately, Unitarians can do nothing right. Accordingly, in page 480, this variation is marked without any qualification or reserve, as one of those "important unacknowledged departures from Newcome's Version, which are not to be accounted for by mere accident;" on which "the Editors employ lengthened observations in the notes, for the very purpose of divesting them of all appearance of the meaning which would necessarily result from the Primate's rendering deliberately and *unacknowledgedly* rejected and altered by them."

So the indictment stands in its original form (p. 480.); and in this sense it must necessarily be understood by every attentive reader. And yet, if the reader's patience holds out to p. 540, he will see, by the Dean's own acknowledgment, that there was no foundation whatever for the accusation. His words are, "this variation, however, is acknowledged:" as it most certainly is, in a "lengthened note" of fifteen lines, by the Editors of the Improved Version. And if it be so acknowledged, and you knew it to be acknow-

ledged, was it fair, Mr. Dean, in you, in p. 480, to introduce this clause as "a specimen of important unacknowledged departures from Newcome's Version?"—Upon whom, in this case, does the charge rest of a deficiency "in honour and honesty?"

In the last clause of the verse, however, the very reverend accuser stands upon stronger ground. The Primate reads, "the Son of man, who *was* in heaven," for which the Editors of the Improved Version most *unacknowledgedly* substitute "the Son of man [who is in heaven]," not only presuming without any notice to substitute the *is* of the Common Version for the *was* of the Primate's, but, what is infinitely worse, including the last four words in brackets, as an indication not only of their own doubts concerning the genuineness of the clause, the reasons for which they have assigned in a "lengthened observation" of three lines at the foot of the page, but, what is far worse, as implying that Newcome and Griesbach partook of the same doubts.

"Are we then to suppose," exclaims the indignant accuser (p. 541.), and what reader possessed of the smallest portion of holy zeal can fail to sympathize in his feelings, and to join in the eloquent interrogatory? "Are we then to suppose this careful and significant demarcation by the

“ brackets, to which nothing corresponding oc-  
 “ curs in either Griesbach or Newcome, as well  
 “ as the substitution of *is* for *was*, to have been  
 “ both of them slips of the pen, or errors of the  
 “ press? both occurring without the slightest no-  
 “ tice of the variation, and both occurring toge-  
 “ ther in a clause of considerable moment in the  
 “ Unitarian question, and one also to which a  
 “ note [*of three lines*] is annexed, relating both  
 “ to the authenticity of the clause and to its mean-  
 “ ing, the attention of the Editors of course spe-  
 “ cially directed to both the points of difference,  
 “ and yet neither of them glanced at by a single  
 “ observation?”

As every reader may not understand this heavy  
 charge of the two brackets, which rouses the  
 Dean's indignation to such an alarming height, it  
 may be proper to mention that Griesbach, in his  
 edition of the Greek Testament, prefixes a certain  
 mark to every reading which in his judgment is  
 probably erroneous, though he did not take the  
 liberty to alter it in the text. And Archbishop  
 Newcome professes to include such readings in  
 brackets. This notation is adopted in the Im-  
 proved Version. In such notations, as all know  
 who have made the trial, it is difficult to be per-  
 fectly correct. The Primate himself candidly  
 acknowledges that he has “sometimes inatten-

"tively departed from this rule." The Editors of the Improved Version have in the present instance committed an error of the same kind; and they must be content to leave their case to the judgment of the reader. All readers are not like the Dean of Cork.

Why the very reverend accuser should quarrel with the Editors for substituting *is* for *was*, is not so apparent. It is the orthodox interpretation: it is appealed to as a proof of the divinity of Christ: it is also the word used in the Public Version. The Editors therefore are surely entitled to some thanks, for redeeming the clause from the hands of the Arians, to which the Primate's translation had given it. But, alas! all is wrong which Unitarians can do. Every thing in them partakes of the nature of sin. And the sum total of the Dean's indignant complaint amounts to this, that though the translation of the Editors is and must be right, being the same as King James's Version, it was very officious in them as Unitarians to adopt it. So much for the two brackets and the word *is*.

IV. The fourth charge against the Editors of the Improved Version is taken from Rom. ix. 5, the first clauses of which are thus rendered by the Primate, in conformity with the Public Version:

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom AS CONCERNING THE FLESH Christ came:" for which the Editors substitute, "BY NATURAL DESCENT Christ came."

This is a variation of some importance. The phrase "according to the flesh" is a Jewish idiom. It is used by the apostle Paul to express natural consanguinity. Thus (Rom. ix. 3), he speaks of the Jews as his "brethren and kindred according to the flesh." His language is well understood: it involves no mystery, nor is it suspected of any. In the next sentence the same phrase in the same sense is applied to Christ. And the English reader, misled by his system, immediately discovers a reference to his human nature, as distinguished from his divine. To obviate this error, the Editors of the Improved Version have substituted what appeared to them the equivalent phrase "by natural descent."

This is a departure from Newcome's Version not acknowledged in the notes of the Improved Version. It is for the candid reader to judge whether this omission was inadvertent and unintentional, or voluntary and fraudulent. The very reverend dignitary posts it up as "a specimen of important unacknowledged departure from Newcome's Version not to be accounted for by mere accident:" and in support and aggrava-

tion of the charge, he urges (p. 589), that "it  
 " was a change to which the Editors attach a very  
 " high value, and which, with the Archbishop's  
 " Version lying before them, could not have been  
 " made without the fullest deliberation and de-  
 " sign. This must be evident to every one who  
 " considers not merely the wideness of the depar-  
 " ture from the Archbishop's translation, but the  
 " still more *emphatical* language of the *Primate's*  
 " note, 'of whom as to his *human lineage* Christ  
 " 'is descended.' Whether the Editors have on  
 " this important part of Scripture acted with  
 " good faith by their professed model, I leave to  
 " the reader to judge for himself." And so, Mr.  
 Dean, do I, fully convinced that no reader of  
 judgment and candour will impeach their integri-  
 ty upon such insufficient and slender grounds.

In the remainder of the verse the Primate reads,  
 with the Public Version, "WHO IS OVER ALL,  
 " GOD BLESSED FOR EVERMORE, AMEN:" for which  
 the Improved Version substitutes, upon the au-  
 thority of Clarke and Lindsey, "GOD, WHO IS  
 " OVER ALL, BE BLESSED FOR EVER."

The Dean is very indignant that any change  
 should be made in the Bible translation. But for  
 this the Editors of the Improved Version do not  
 ask his leave: and at any rate, they would not he-  
 sitate to prefer the authority of the celebrated

Dr. Samuel Clarke, and the learned and modest Lindsey, to that of the parading Dean of Cork.

“ But the point,” as the Dean observes (p. 585), “ with which we are more immediately concerned, is not so much the change of Version, as that the change should be made without notice.” This text is alleged by the very reverend accuser as “ a specimen of *important unacknowledged* departure from Newcome’s Version, not to be accounted for by mere accident:” it is brought forward as a violation of the engagement which the Editors had entered into with the public, of making open acknowledgment of every departure from the Primate’s Version, and therefore as a breach of “ honour and honesty ” in a case “ vitally affecting some of the great doctrines of Christianity.” And this very clause, “ God, who is over all, be blessed for ever,” is blazoned in capitals to excite attention, to attract the eye, and to fix upon the reader’s mind the conviction, which under these circumstances is inevitable, that this clause is included in the general charge, and that it is an important specimen of fraudulent dealing on the part of the Editors of the Improved Version, which deserves to be exposed to public indignation, and which merits the severest reprehension.

But what will be the surprise of the candid



reader when he learns that the accusation is totally unfounded ; and that, with the single exception of the word " Amen," which is unaccountably dropped in the Improved Version, the "*suppression*" of which the Dean himself acknowledges to be " a matter of inferior consideration," the variation from the Primate's text is distinctly acknowledged in the notes to the Improved Version ! Where were the very reverend accuser's visual organs when he committed so great an oversight ? The whole *lengthened observation and note* extended but to eighteen lines, and the acknowledgment of the variation stands in the second line of the note. It was hardly possible to overlook it.

No: and it is too probable that he did not overlook it. What will be the astonishment of every reader who possesses honourable feelings, to learn, that at the very time when the very reverend accuser selected and published this clause as a specimen of important unacknowledged departure from Newcome's Version, and when, upon that ground, he held up the Editors of the Improved Version to public infamy as guilty of deliberate fraud and falsehood, there is strong ground of suspicion that he knew that the charge in this particular was totally unfounded ! For the accusation having been alleged in the front of his

work, where every body would see it, and blazoned in capitals that every body might notice it, it is so ordered, that a hundred pages further on (p. 592), the concession sneaks in, *en passant*, as if ashamed of itself, that the Editors in their note remark that "the Common Version, here adopted by Dr. Newcome, is, 'Who is over all, God 'blessed for ever.'"

Come forth, Mr. Dean, I beseech you, and make good your allegations. Exert your ingenuity: ransack all the stores of your profound learning. Display your logical dexterity. Show us how both sides of a contradiction may be true. Explain how the neglect to make an acknowledgment, can prove a man to be destitute "of honour and honesty," when, by your own concession, that acknowledgment was actually made. Vouchsafe us some satisfaction upon this head, that so we may not only admire your prowess as a sturdy, undaunted and persevering polemic, but may esteem and respect your character as a man of honour and veracity, as a lover of truth, as a friend of virtue, as a consistent professor and teacher of the doctrine of Christ\*.

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\* When the very reverend dignitary has given a satisfactory solution to the questions stated above, perhaps he will have the goodness to explain in what sense consistent with veracity he has made the assertion (p. 829), when, in allusion to the

V. The fifth specimen of "important unacknowledged departure from Newcome's Version," is 2 Cor. viii. 9, which the Primate renders thus :

"For ye know the gracious goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **THOUGH** he was rich, yet for your sakes he **BECAME POOR**, that through his poverty ye might be rich." For which the Improved Version substitutes the words, "**WHILE** he was rich, yet for your sakes he **LIVED IN POVERTY**."

And sooth to say, the Editors have actually omitted in their notes all notice of this variation from the Primate's text.

Here a glorious opportunity offers for the very reverend accuser to display his learning, his eloquence and his charity; and most amply hath he availed himself of it.

To establish the charge of fraudulent design in

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Unitarian missionaries, he says, "Here we find teachers directed to guard all against the danger of belief, and to *enforce emphatically, as the most important truth, that he alone shall be saved who believeth not.*" The vulgar imputation of heresy, infidelity, God-denying and such-like nonsense, because we do not believe as the orthodox believe, we are accustomed to; and the silly buzz has long ceased to annoy us. But that our missionaries emphatically preach up unbelief as *essential to salvation*, is quite a new charge, which rests at present solely upon the Dean's ~~avowment~~ <sup>assertion</sup>. Where is his proof?

the ungodly Editors of the Improved Version, the Dean begins his Commentary (p. 593) with an authoritative and unqualified assertion, which in the very reverend dignitary's writings often supplies the place of proof, that "this passage directly and forcibly expresses the pre-existence of our Lord." He then complains that the Editors "not only substitute words which completely divest the passage of any such signification, but that in a note of *some length*" (being no less than eighteen lines, of which the learned writer may justly complain, being himself so conspicuous for brevity), "enlarging upon and confirming their own rendering, throughout the entire of it not the most remote hint is conveyed of any variance from the Primate's translation." "The Improved Version translates in a sense directly opposite to that of the Primate; labours to enforce the necessity of this sense in a note which is carried to *considerable extent*; and in which Wakefield, Grotius and other authorities, are introduced; does this in contradiction not only to the Primate's rendering, but to his illustration and support of that rendering in strong and emphatical terms in his note, which directly challenged their attention; all this too on a point of *vital import* in the Unitarian scheme, and yet in no place

“is there the slightest glance at this gross departure, or the name of the Archbishop once alluded to, notwithstanding the most solemn assurances to the public, that in every instance of deviation from the Archbishop’s rendering, acknowledgment is openly made in the notes.”

And now, Messrs. Editors, after this solemn indictment at the bar of the public, what have you to say why sentence should not pass upon you according to the law of Dr. Magee?

In the first place, Sir, with respect to the sense of the passage, every scholar and every school-boy knows that the proper translation of the three words *πλουσιος ων επτωχευσε* is, “being rich he lived in poverty.” The Dean in a mass of learned notes, carried on to the marvellous extent of nearly fourscore pages, has proved very much to his own satisfaction, that the same three words may be rendered, and by some learned lexicographers and divines have been actually translated, as in the Public Version, “though he was rich he became poor.” And that we may not be lost in the miry gulf of the Dean’s criticisms, let this for argument’s sake be allowed. Let it be admitted that the words as they stand are ambiguous, and admit of both interpretations.

But even upon the supposition that the Public Version exhibits the only true and admissible

translation, the text contains no proof whatever of the divinity or the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. The Dean's *dictum* that "this passage directly" and forcibly expresses the pre-existence of our "Lord," is the silliest, wildest assertion that ever was made. Ignatius Loyola was rich, yet he became poor: is this a "direct and forcible expression of the pre-existence" of the founder of the order of Jesuits? Such it seems is the logic of Dr. Magee.

It is indeed true, that if the pre-existence of Christ had previously been proved, upon principles independent of this text, the apostle's words might be supposed to allude to that doctrine. But first to assume the doctrine in order to explain the text, and then to infer it as a conclusion from the text, is to assume the very point to be proved; of which species of logic, to say the truth, the work of the very reverend and very learned Dean supplies many beautiful examples in addition to the specimen here exhibited.

This text therefore not being of that *vital import* to the Unitarian scheme which the Dean is pleased to represent, it is possible that the Editors of the Improved Version, though Unitarians, might through mere inadvertence neglect to notice this unimportant variation from the Primate's text: and not with that deep and fraudulent de-

sign, which is so charitably imputed to them by the pious and orthodox Dean.

Allow me, Sir, here to explain a doctrine which I have stated in the *Calm Inquiry*, and which the learned dignitary has, as usual, taken abundance of pains to misrepresent and to distort: and (what is of more consequence) which some worthy and well meaning persons have misunderstood.

In the *Calm Inquiry* (p. 174), I have stated it as probable that our Lord possessed a voluntary power of working miracles: in this sense I explain the text (John iii. 34), "God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." It was presumed, and it ought perhaps to have been distinctly expressed, that our Lord's powers were restricted to that class of miracles which were necessary for the promulgation of the gospel; such as healing the sick, curing the insane, raising the dead, &c. And it was conceived that our Lord's mind was so disciplined by his temptation and other means, and that his understanding was so enlightened, that he would make no improper use of the mighty powers intrusted to him, and would never be inclined to work a miracle upon an improper occasion. This hypothesis is thought best to explain the tone of authority adopted by our Lord upon such occasions, and to account for his great and visible superiority over the apostles,

who only appear to work miracles upon immediate suggestions, and in the name and by the authority of their Master. It is obvious to every reflecting mind, that the exercise of our Lord's voluntary powers under such circumstances would eventually produce precisely the same effect as if in every instance he performed a miracle in consequence of a Divine suggestion: and this fact was distinctly foreknown to the Supreme Being at the time when these great powers were intrusted to the direction of his chosen servant and messenger Jesus Christ. This hypothesis appears to me to be sufficiently intelligible, and very probable, but it is not one upon which any great stress is to be laid. And Unitarian Christians in general seem rather inclined to believe that our Lord performed no miracle but in consequence of an immediate suggestion.

VI. The sixth and last of the learned dignitary's charges, and which he seems to have selected as the *ne plus ultra* of Unitarian faithlessness and impiety, and in the prosecution of which he appears to have put forth all his strength, and to have exhausted all his venom, is founded upon Heb. xii. 25, 26; the first clause of which stands thus in the Common Version and in Archbishop Newcome: "See that ye refuse not HIM who speak-



“eth;” for which the Improved Version has substituted, “See that ye refuse not *God* who “speaketh,” printing the supplied word *God* in italics, to intimate that it is not found in the original.

The learned dignitary takes upon himself to be wonderfully angry at the presumption and impiety of the Editors in supplying the ellipsis with the word *God*. But let the Dean speak for himself in his own mild and edifying language.

“Griesbach and Newcome,” says he (p. 671), “are the two great standards to which the Editors “profess to adhere: yet here they depart from “both, and arbitrarily introduce the word *God*, “which is not only not to be found in either, but “which is not even pretended to have place in “any one of the Manuscripts, Versions, or Fathers known to be in existence: so that here “there is a direct fabrication of the word *God*, “and a gross imposition on the reader. To say “that the word has been introduced, because the “Unitarians conceive *God* to be intended as the “speaker, is merely to say that the comment of “the lowest and most illiterate order of Socinians “shall be taken as forming a part of the original “of the New Testament. This transcends Popery itself. The Council of Trent only decreed “that the Comment imposed by the Church of

"Rome should be received as giving the meaning  
 "of Scripture: but the Council of Essex-Street  
 "ordains that the Comment imposed by the  
 "Church *which denies Christ*, shall be received as  
 "part of the Scripture itself. That the word is  
 "*printed in italics* is but a poor evasion. The  
 "common and uninformed reader, the unlearned  
 "man of 'sound understanding,' whom they se-  
 "lect as the proper arbiter of their criticisms, but  
 "little attends to, and is for the most part igno-  
 "rant of this distinction."\* Presuming, no  
 doubt, upon this ignorance, and expecting to  
 escape detection, though the Editors have printed  
 the word in italics, the Dean has cited it in ro-  
 man capitals, thus making it appear, to those who

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\* In the Introduction to the *Calm Inquiry* (p. 5), it is  
 stated that the question concerning the person of Christ "is  
 "an inquiry into a plain matter of fact, which is to be deter-  
 "mined like any other fact by its specific evidence—the evi-  
 "dence of plain unequivocal testimony, for judging of which  
 "no other qualifications are requisite than a *sound understand-*  
 "*ing and an honest mind.*"

This assertion has given great offence to those gentlemen  
 who think that a man cannot be a judge of the truth of doc-  
 trines which lie at the foundation of the Christian faith, unless  
 he is a profound Greek scholar. This is the cause of the  
 many sarcastic allusions to these expressions in some late  
 writers. Bishop Burgess is particularly sore upon this sub-  
 ject; and Dr. Magee, his humble friend, thinks that he ought  
 to be very sore too.

do know and attend to the distinction, as part of the text.

The very reverend dignitary proceeds:—" Let  
 " it for a moment be supposed that the Received  
 " Version, instead of reading '*him who speaketh*,'  
 " had substituted '*Christ in his divine nature*' for  
 " the word '*him*,' would the Unitarians conceive  
 " that King James's translators had dealt fairly  
 " with the public? Would they not, on the con-  
 " trary, clamour loudly against this as a dishonest  
 " attempt to impose the Trinitarian comments as  
 " the text of Scripture? Would there be any end  
 " to the outcry which would be raised against in-  
 " terested priests?" &c. &c.

" The fact is, they *plainly saw* that the text  
 " as it stands must unavoidably lead the mind  
 " to Christ as the speaker. They *saw more*:  
 " they *saw* that it not only introduces Christ  
 " as the speaker now, but as the speaker be-  
 " fore, both in giving the law and in uttering  
 " oracles through the prophets. They *saw in*  
 " *truth*, that not only the præ-existence but the  
 " divinity of Christ was obviously deducible  
 " from this passage, and with the wisdom be-  
 " longing to their generation they have made  
 " the requisite alteration in the text. They  
 " have been compelled not only to *invent* a new  
 " translation for the text, but also to *invent*

" a new text for the translation\*. Examples  
 " abound of a nature similar to that which has  
 " been just adduced, and many of a quality yet  
 " more insidious and dishonest."

And now, what have these daring innovators, these *seers* of sights, the Editors of the Improved Version, to offer in favour of this novel, most *insidious*, and most *dishonest* corruption of the sacred text? a corruption which finds no parallel but in their own corrupt writings? a forgery and a fraud which far transcends all example in ancient and in modern times; which exceeds Popery itself; and which, as the Dean emphatically assures us, cannot be matched in the performances of his own holy brotherhood, viz. supplying the ellipsis in the text by the word God printed in italics?

In truth these unfortunate Editors have but very little to say for themselves; and that little can only afford satisfaction to men of " sound understanding and honest hearts:" so that they

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\* This jingling and scandalous charge, though limited by the Dean to this one particular passage, has been charitably extended by the Bampton Lecturer (who, for the credit of his veracity, it is to be hoped never saw the Improved Version,) to the whole work. See p. 94. To call upon him for proofs might be thought unreasonable. The whole tenor of his Discourses plainly manifests that such an uncourtly demand was never in his contemplation,

entertain very faint hopes of giving content to the Dean and his very learned friends. The truth, however, must come out: and here it is.

In the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus, at the first verse, it is thus written: "GOD SPAKE ALL THESE WORDS TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL."

The Editors, therefore, of the Improved Version did not conceive that they committed an unpardonable offence when they supplied the ellipsis with the word God, "whose voice" it was which "then shook the earth." And I am confident that when the venerable Dean produces equal authority for his proposed amendment, "Christ in his divine nature," they will most readily and thankfully receive it into their text. And if the Church of Rome herself can establish her doctrine upon similar ground, I may vouch for it that the *Christ-denying* Church of Essex-street will admit that doctrine as an article of faith.

But the matter must not rest here. The Dean of Cork has produced this passage, this very clause, "See that ye refuse not *God* who speaketh," as a specimen of important, unacknowledged departure from Newcome's Version, not to be accounted for from mere accident." He has marked the variation in capitals, to attract notice: he has printed the word God in roman characters,

not as the Editors of the Improved Version have done in italics, so that those of his readers *who understand distinctions* are naturally led to believe that the Editors have forged the text, an offence of which indeed the Dean distinctly accuses them; and that they, by not acknowledging it, have made the Archbishop responsible for it. It is impossible for those who read the charge alleged by the Dean against the Editors (p. 481 of his last volume), to form any other conclusion.

Now, Mr. Dean, permit me with all humility to ask two or three plain questions. Did not you know at the very time when you exhibited this charge against the Editors of the Improved Version in a form which necessarily led to this and to no other conclusion, that every word of this conclusion, the inevitable conclusion from your own statement, was erroneous and unfounded? Did you not know, though poor illiterate Unitarians might be ignorant of it, that the word *God*, which *you* have printed in roman characters, was by *them* printed in italics, for the express purpose of showing that this word was not in the original, but that it was introduced by them to supply the ellipsis? And knowing this, was it quite " honest " and " fair " in you to print the word *God* in roman letters, and then to accuse the Editors of *inventing* the text? Did you not know that the

Editors, far from charging their alteration upon the Primate, had distinctly set down in their notes the reading both of the original and the Primate? And though it did not exactly suit your purpose to make the acknowledgment at the beginning of your book, where you brought your charge, where all your readers would have seen it, by which the Editors would have been saved from all suspicion of foul play, have you not yourself, Mr. Dean, towards the close of your work, (p. 694.) two hundred pages after the allegation of the charge, and where you might reasonably presume that nobody would look for it, slipped in, as it were by stealth, this remarkable concession: "It must indeed be admitted that with respect to the clause hitherto considered, the Editors are not chargeable on this head: for in their note they confess that both in the Greek and Newcome the reading is, 'See that ye refuse not him who speaketh.'" And this concession comes after having charged them directly, peremptorily and without any modification whatever (p. 482.), with having in this, equally with other clauses, deliberately and *unacknowledgedly* rejected the Primate's rendering. How, learned Sir, do you contrive to reconcile these *apparent* contradictions? How is it that men are to blame, and to be censured as false, dishonest and dishonourable,

for doing that which you acknowledge they never did? For once, Mr. Dean, deign to have a little consideration for that small proportion of your readers who are men of "sound understandings and honest hearts," whom in the lofty consciousness of your own vast superiority of learning, you commonly treat with such ineffable disdain. Condescend so far to their mean capacities, as to explain that apparent inconsistency in your conduct, which in their foolish way of thinking is deserving of epithets which I do not choose to express. Recollect, Mr. Dean, the language which you would yourself have used to the Editors of the Improved Version, had it been possible for them to have acted a similar part, and save us the trouble of the application\*.

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\* It would be advisable for the very reverend dignitary to be a little more *correct* in his assertions, not indeed for the sake of the *God-denying, Christ-denying* Unitarians, who being without the pale of civilized warfare, may lawfully be attacked with any weapons fair or foul; nor yet for the sake of his *own* character, concerning which the Dean appears to entertain a most magnanimous indifference; but for the sake of his friends, who by implicit reliance upon his unqualified assertions are sometimes brought into a very awkward dilemma. It is not long since the worthy Bishop of St. David's was made the instrument of retailing a most unfounded and atrocious calumny against the author of this note, viz. that Mr. Belsham says, the "clergy are paid to discountenance and re-



The remaining clauses in the text under consideration (Heb. xii. 25.), contain some variations from the Primate's rendering, the acknowledgment of which has been omitted by the Editors of the Improved Version, upon which neglect, however, the learned Dean has not judged it necessary to expatiate: probably because he did not

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"press the truth." And when the charge was denied, and the Bishop was challenged to produce his authority, his Lordship confesses that he had not even seen Mr. B's book: but, says his Lordship, "I quoted the words from an authority *"which I was sure I could safely trust."* This infallible authority was that of Dr. Magee, who had indeed printed a sentence of similar import, with inverted commas, as if it had been (which it was not) a quotation from the Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise. And though the pious prelate, when convinced that he had trusted to a broken reed, and had unwittingly propagated a calumny, than which, to use his own words, "a more false and atrocious never was uttered," takes much laudable pains to prove that the assertion at most was but half a fib, because, with a few verbal alterations, what I did not say might be made to resemble what I did say; yet, to speak the truth, his Lordship was by no means successful in his attempt. And notwithstanding all the ingenuity and learning which the worthy prelate has exhausted upon the subject, in the Gentleman's Magazine for August of 1815, the assertion first found in Dr. Magee's learned work, and afterwards repeated with a little additional colouring by the pious Bishop of St. David's, is an untruth as palpable and unfounded as ever issued from the school of Loyola. As it now stands, it is indeed the joint production of the Bishop and the Dean: and

find it easy to magnify the error into an offence of high importance.

The clause immediately following that which has been already so minutely investigated, stands thus in the Primate's version: "For if those escaped not who refused him that uttered 'the ORACLES OF GOD on earth,'"—for which the Improved Version reads "WHEN HE uttered 'ORACLES on earth.'" This variation, which is of some importance, is not noticed by the Editors.

It is remarkable that in this clause the Pri-

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neither of these venerable dignitaries is responsible for the whole of it. But to what degree this division of labour between two holy men may reduce the responsibility of each, is a question the solution of which must be left to that renowned casuist the Abbot of Quedlinberg.

The passage in the Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise, referred to by Dr. Magee, and the words of which he professed to quote, thereby misleading good Bishop Burgess, and which, I am confident, that neither the Bishop nor the Dean can possibly regard as a libel upon the Established clergy, is thus expressed: "Men who are engaged to defend an established system are, from that very circumstance, engaged to discourage inquiry and to oppose truth, unless, which is not often the case, truth should happen to be the established doctrine." Review of Mr. W., p. 199.

mate has introduced the word God without any authority from the original: for the word *χηματιζω* by no means necessarily implies divine inspiration. It is also observable that the Primate has printed the word God in roman, not in italic letters: so that in his translation it appears as an original, not as a supplementary word. The Editors of the Improved Version, regarding this as too great a liberty to be taken with the text, have in their Version left out the word God.

Let us suppose now that the case had been reversed, that the Primate in the first clause had supplied the word God, and had printed it in italics, but had omitted it in the second: also that the Editors of the Improved Version had omitted the word God in the first clause, and had introduced it in roman letters in the second: in what a different channel would the Dean's criticisms and invectives have run! What a hue and cry would have been raised against these ungodly Editors, for wilfully and *unacknowledgedly* corrupting the sacred text; and how unmercifully would they have been loaded with all the vituperative epithets in the Dean's copious vocabulary! How strenuously would it have

been maintained that the word God was rightly supplied by the Primate in the first clause! And how highly would his fairness and candour have been applauded in distinguishing the word by italics, that *every reader* might see that it was a supplementary expression and not to be found in the original text! With what keenness of censure would this open and manly conduct of the Primate in the first clause have been contrasted with the artful and fraudulent management of the Editors of the Improved Version in the second! What rummaging would there have been of Lexicons, what poring over voluminous indexes, by the patient Dean and by his numerous and learned allies, in order to accumulate quotation upon quotation, and criticism upon criticism, so as to fill twenty or thirty pages with ancient and modern lore, to prove what nobody ever doubted, that the word χρηματίζω does not necessarily signify to utter an oracle of God, and therefore that these daring innovators had no right to have introduced that word at all! In what a lofty tone of indignant and impassioned eloquence would the pious dignitary have exposed the fraud, the falsehood, the presumptuous impiety of these audacious Editors in printing the word God in roman characters! "They *saw*," would he have said, "that the

“ word God was wanting in the original. They  
 “ saw more. They saw that by printing it in ro-  
 “ man letters, their readers would be made to be-  
 “ lieve that the word God was a part of the ori-  
 “ ginal text, and thus the *comment of the lowest*  
 “ *and most illiterate of the Socinians shall be taken*  
 “ *as forming a part of the original of the New*  
 “ Testament. This transcends Popery itself. This  
 “ wilful corruption of the sacred text can only  
 “ proceed from the Christ-denying apostates of  
 “ Essex-street, whose missionaries preach up un-  
 “ belief as essential to salvation. Where will you  
 “ find any thing to compare with this in King  
 “ James’s translators? This is forging Scripture  
 “ with a witness. It is not only inventing a trans-  
 “ lation for the text, but a text for the transla-  
 “ tion.”

Such no doubt would have been the strain of the learned Dean’s indignant invective, had the translation of the Primate been that of the Editors, and the translation of the Editors that of the Primate. But as Primates can seldom, if ever, do wrong, so it should seem that these unfortunate Editors can never do right.

In the last clause of the text, the Primate’s Version reads, “ Much more we shall not escape, if  
 “ we reject him who was from heaven.”—For

which the Improved Version reads, "Much LESS  
" shall we escape if we reject him SPEAKING from  
" heaven."

This variation should have been acknowledged in the notes, especially, as by supplying the ellipsis differently, a considerable diversity is created in the sense. The original is, "him from heaven." The Primate, by supplying the words "who was," supposes a reference to Christ. The Improved Version supplying the word "speaking," and the Public Version, "him who speaketh," refer the action to God, who formerly spoke on earth when he delivered the Law to Moses: but who under the new dispensation speaks from heaven by the gifts and powers of the holy spirit.

I shall now briefly recapitulate the facts produced by the Dean, as far as they are substantiated by evidence, that the reader may judge how far they support the charge of fraud, of falsehood and of faithlessness, so vehemently urged by the Dean against the Editors of the Improved Version.

1. Luke i. 35. For, "THE Son of God," as it stands in Newcome, the Editors of the Improved Version have without acknowledgment substituted, "A Son of God."

2. John i. 12. For, "POWER TO BECOME chil-

"dren of God," the Editors have substituted  
 "AUTHORITY TO BE, &c."

3. John iii. 13. For, "the Son of man who  
 "was in heaven," the Editors adhere to the Public  
 Version [who is in heaven] including the words  
 in brackets, without proper authority and with-  
 out any acknowledgment.

4. Rom. ix. 5. Newcome reads, "of whom  
 "AS CONCERNING THE FLESH Christ came:" for  
 which, and without acknowledgment, the Im-  
 proved Version substitutes, "of whom, BY NATU-  
 "RAL DESCENT, &c."

5. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Newcome reads with the  
 Public Version, "that THOUGH he was rich yet  
 "for your sakes he BECAME poor:" for which,  
 and without any notice of the variation, the Im-  
 proved Version substitutes, "that WHILE he was  
 "rich he LIVED IN POVERTY."

6. Heb. xii. 25, 26. Newcome reads, "If  
 "those escaped not who refused him THAT uttered  
 "THE ORACLES OF GOD on earth," for which the  
 Improved Version substitutes, "WHEN he uttered  
 "ORACLES on earth." Newcome reads, "much  
 "MORE we shall NOT escape." The Improved  
 Version substitutes, "much LESS shall we escape."  
 —Newcome reads, "if we reject him WHO WAS  
 "from heaven:" the Improved Version substi-  
 tutes, "if we reject him SPEAKING from heaven."

And these variations are all unnoticed by the Editors.

Such is the prodigious birth of which this labouring mountain after all its mighty and portentous throes has been at length delivered. The Editors of the Improved Version profess, wherever they deviate from the Primate's text, to mark the variation in their notes and to insert the Primate's words. This promise they have, generally speaking, fulfilled. But whatever care they might take, they could not flatter themselves that they were exempt from oversights, or that in every instance they should escape from error. Out of many hundreds of texts, six instances of unacknowledged variation have, by the sagacity and industry of the Dean of Cork, been brought to light: and these of comparatively little importance. And yet, upon these six cases, the very reverend dignitary has founded a grave and solemn charge of fraud and falsehood and faithlessness, against the Editors of the Improved Version; and this charge he has prosecuted with unparalleled vehemence and malignity through an octavo volume of several hundred pages closely printed, and dressed out with no small display of critical erudition. It is hard to believe that the Dean himself can be serious in alleging charges so grave,



upon a foundation so frivolous. But whether he is serious or not in alleging them, it is impossible that any individual in the united kingdom, man, woman or child, who possesses an atom of common sense, can be serious in giving credit to them, or can hesitate to treat them with the most sovereign and superlative contempt.

It is true that the very reverend accuser is pleased to allege (p. 481.), that he has selected "but very few specimens out of the number that might be adduced:" and (p. 693.) that "examples abound of a quality yet more insidious and dishonest."

The Editors are duly sensible of their obligation to the Dean of Cork, for his great lenity and forbearance: that *half his strength he put not forth*. They disdain however to avail themselves of his gracious condescension. Out of the many hundreds of variations which occur in the Improved Version, it is possible that through inadvertence, surely not wholly unpardonable, many other omissions may have taken place, almost as important as those selected by the Dean. But they defy him, with his utmost industry, stimulated by his utmost malice, to produce a single passage to which the charges of "insidious and dishonest" can be justly applied. They know the Dean of Cork too well, to give implicit cred-

dit to his professions of forbearance. And they entertain no doubt, that if by any means he could have discovered a single text in the Improved Version, which by the art and venom of his criticism could have been distorted to a signification more offensive to his readers, and more disreputable to the Editors, than any which he has already produced, he would have seized it with eagerness, and would have presented it to his admirers as the *bonne bouche* of his savoury repast.

It may then be fairly presumed, that the six passages which have been selected from the Improved Version, are the most vulnerable which the industry and sagacity of the learned dignitary could discover. And surely it is no mean attestation to the attention and fidelity of the Editors of that work, that their most vigilant, persevering and inveterate opponent, after having sat down to the investigation, for the express purpose of exposing the work and its Editors to the indignation and contempt of all good men, should be able to find no better foundation for his gross and unqualified charges of falsehood, dishonesty, and dishonourable violation of their word and promise, than what is contained in these six passages. This indirect and involuntary testimony to the character of the Editors, extorted so unwillingly from an enemy, and from such an enemy, cannot

but be peculiarly gratifying to them, and must eminently contribute to raise the character of the work in the estimation of the public, which, after having already exhausted three large impressions, is now bidding welcome to a fourth, which has just issued from the press\*.

The professed design of the Dean of Cork in his late publication, is to load with infamy the Editors of the Improved Version, as having wilfully and fraudulently broken their engagement with the public. But as the venerable dignitary is not remarkable for adhering closely to his subject, he has occasionally diverged from his main design, in order to combat the rendering or the comments of the Improved Version. But though the very reverend ecclesiastic has made a marvellous display of minute criticism, and of lexicographical learning; though he has laid down his dictums with the tone of a pedagogue armed for the castigation of the trembling elves who should dispute his high authority; and though, where argument fails, its place is abundantly supplied with the most vulgar and contumelious railing; the learned *gentleman* will have the good,

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\* The Fifth Edition of the Improved Version is now ready for publication.

ness to excuse the Editors both from adopting his amendments and retorting his calumnies. As to the former, they have too moderate an opinion of the Dean's qualifications as a Scripture critic, to be greatly influenced by his dictatorial decisions: and with regard to the latter, they have too much respect to the dignity of their own character to imitate his example. The interpretations which the Editors of the Improved Version have adopted, are in general supported by authorities of such high and established reputation in sacred literature, that they can have little to fear from the attacks of critics of such a calibre as the learned dignitary. On one side we see the names of Faustus Socinus, of Slichtingius, of Crellius, of Wolzogenius, of Grotius, of Le Clerc, of Newton, of Locke, of Dr. Samuel Clarke, of Emlyn, of Sykes, of Law, of Jebb, of Tyrwhit, of Lindsey, of Wakefield, of Priestley, of Cappe, of Disney, and many other names which are an honour to learning and to human nature; and on the other side stands——The very reverend Dr. William Magee, Dean of Cork.

Before I conclude, it may not be amiss to remark, that the absolute nullity of the most material of the charges exhibited against the Editors of the Improved Version, acknowledged as such

even by the accuser himself; the absurd and laboured exaggeration of those that remain, which give a cast of ridicule to the whole indictment; and the palpable self-contradictions which have been detected in the course of the preceding remarks, plainly show either that the Dean of Cork's intellectual perceptions upon theological questions are so uncommonly dim, or that his controversial morality is of so very lax a kind, as may justly induce a man of "a sound understanding" and an honest heart" to pause before he gives entire credence to his unqualified assertions and his virulent declamation: and upon the whole to "believe what he shall prove, rather than what he shall say,"

The worthy dignitary as he approaches the conclusion of his labours, takes occasion to regret that his evil destiny should have imposed upon him so wearisome a task. "In truth," says this pains-taking writer (p. 689), "it is scarcely possible for any person who has not submitted to the odious labour of examining for himself, *an odious labour I can truly aver it to be*, to form an adequate idea of the mode in which the sacred word has been abused and falsified by the Unitarians," &c. &c. The Dean is right. Nothing can be more odious than the labour

of compiling such a publication as that of Dr. Magee, excepting the still more irksome task of reading it — a task to which I verily believe that no human patience has yet been found adequate, or ever will. Nothing surely can be more disgusting to an enlightened and liberal mind than to toil through a work so chaotic, so mis-shapen, so indigested: so wholly deficient in precision, in elegance, in perspicuity, in urbanity, in sound argument, in liberality of spirit, in comprehension of views, in every quality which is requisite to constitute excellence in composition: so full of vanity, of pedantry, of peddling criticism, of unprovoked abuse, of unproved accusation, of foul and malignant calumny. The composition of such a work must have been a drudgery to which few could have submitted but the Dean of Cork. Nor is it to be believed that even Dr. Magee himself would have endured the labour and the shame of so disgraceful an undertaking, had he not been supported, like many good men before him, by “RESPECT  
“ UNTO THE RECOMPENCE OF REWARD.”\*

T. BELSHAM.

Essex House,  
March 1, 1817.

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\* The Dean's friends give out that he has an absolute promise of the next Irish bishoprick which becomes vacant. He has

P. S. It is worthy of observation that the Improved Version of the New Testament, upon which and upon its Editors so much unsparing abuse and unfounded calumny have been lavished by Dean Magee, Dr. Moysey and others, does not from beginning to end contain an expression of asperity or disrespect against any individual, or body of Christians, on account of difference of opinion in theological doctrine. The Editors calmly and plainly express their own sense of the disputed passages; they assign their reasons and allege their authorities, leaving the reader to form his own judgment; and refraining from all unbecoming censure of others who interpret the Scriptures differently. Whether this temperate style of writing, or the acrimonious invective of their adversaries, best indicates a good cause, a

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indeed paid its price : a price which few men of honourable feelings would have paid for the archbishoprick of Toledo. The University of Dublin has it seems, till lately, been marked by the name of *the silent Sister*. But Counsellor Phillips, in his Recollections of Curran, p. 17, appeals to Dean Magee's work as redeeming his Alma Mater from the injurious imputation. Some persons however, who are as good judges in this case as the learned Counsellor, may think that, if the *silent Sister* could not have spoken with a better spirit, and to better purpose, it would have been more to her credit to have remained *silent* still, unless she aspires to the character of a  
SHREW.

sincere love of truth, and the genuine influence of Christian principles and a Christian spirit in their inquiries after it, may be left to the judgment of the serious reader.

The unprovoked personal abuse of so humble an individual as myself, with which the Dean is pleased to load his pages, is altogether unworthy of notice. It is however somewhat surprising, that the very reverend dignitary does not seem to be aware that extravagant exaggeration defeats its own purpose. If I am what the Dean of Cork is pleased to represent, it is surprising that he could condescend to waste so much of his valuable time in writing down my publications. Be that as it may, it is a satisfaction to know that every body is not of the same way of thinking with Dean Magee. This will appear from the following extract of a letter from a person who is as much superior to the Dean in rank and station, as he is in sound learning, in urbanity of manners, and in every estimable quality of the mind and of the heart. After animadverting with some degree of animation upon certain passages in my writings which had unfortunately incurred his disapprobation, his Lordship adds, "I certainly have risen from an impartial study of the Scriptures with a conviction on one essential



“point entirely contrary to your own. But I  
“never on that account entertained the least un-  
“friendly feeling towards you, or the less highly  
“esteemed your talents, your learning, or your  
“sincerity.”

THE END.

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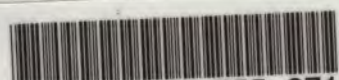
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